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# A Human Life

a book of poems

by  
pc keefer

book two



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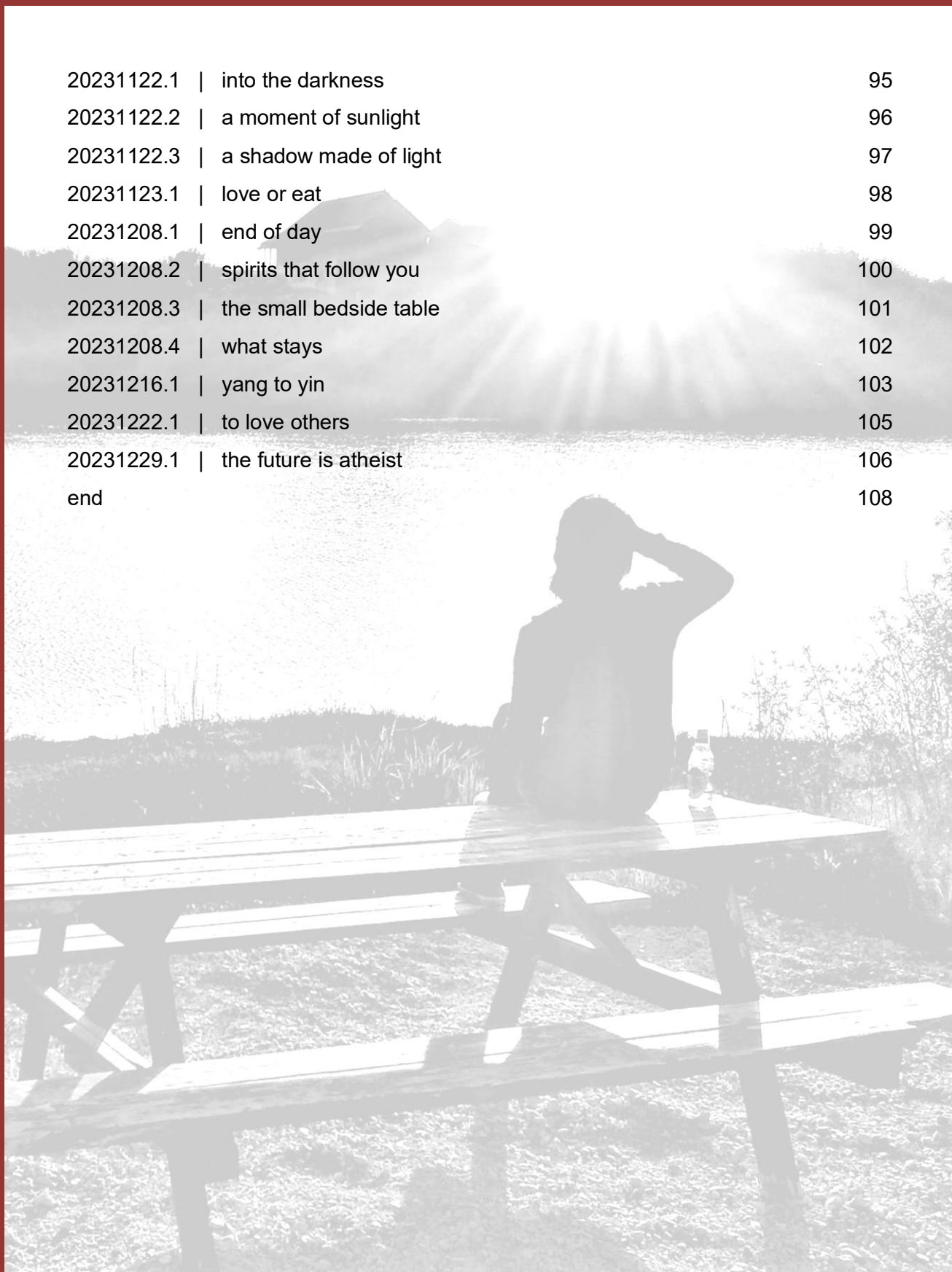
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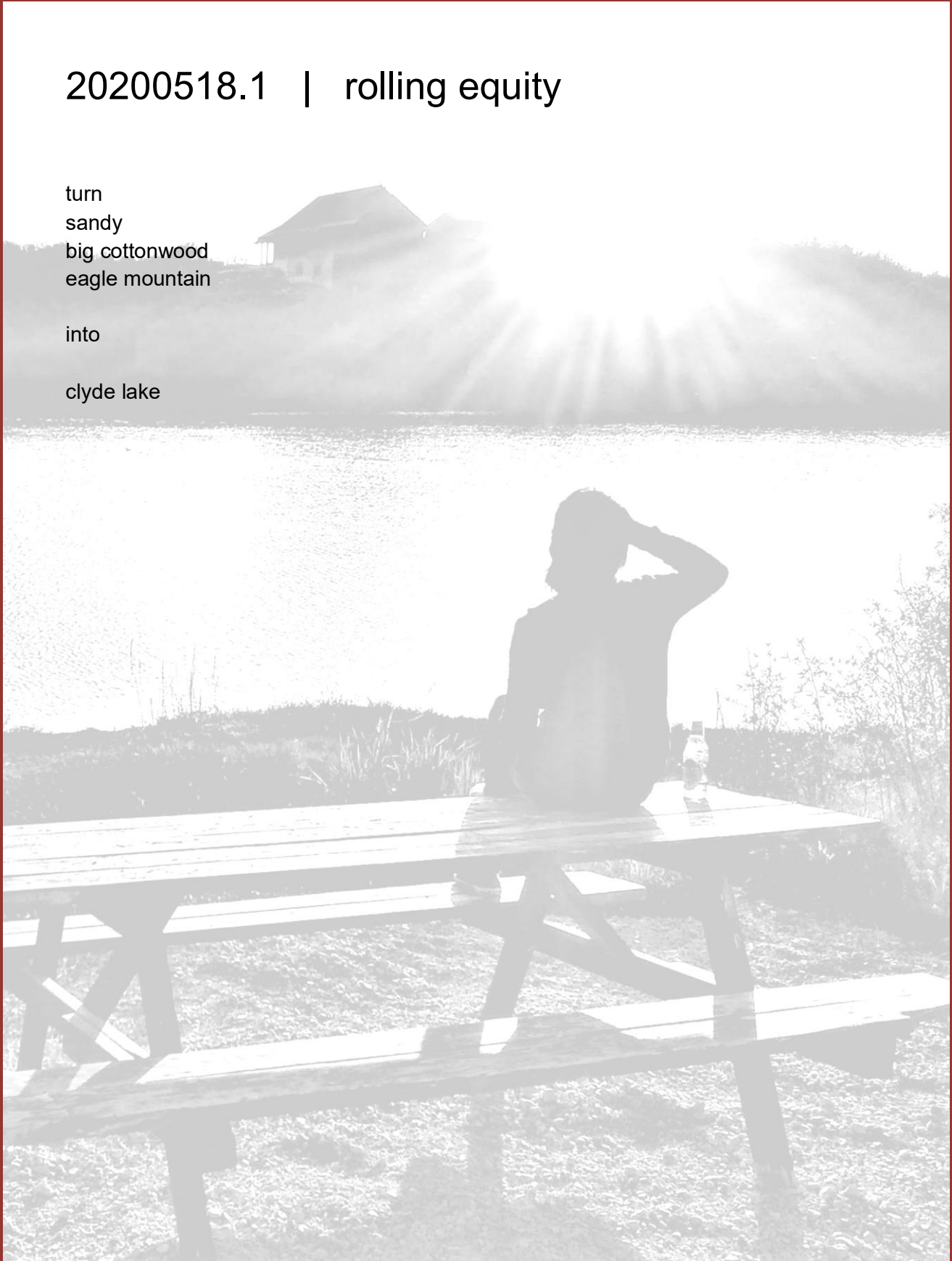


20200518.1 | rolling equity

turn  
sandy  
big cottonwood  
eagle mountain

into

clyde lake





## 20200518.2 | throw it in the hole

time, cards, and cash  
gone in a flash

throw it in the hole  
where it really go  
no one really know  
throw it in the ho

gave up free will  
bent my life to her will

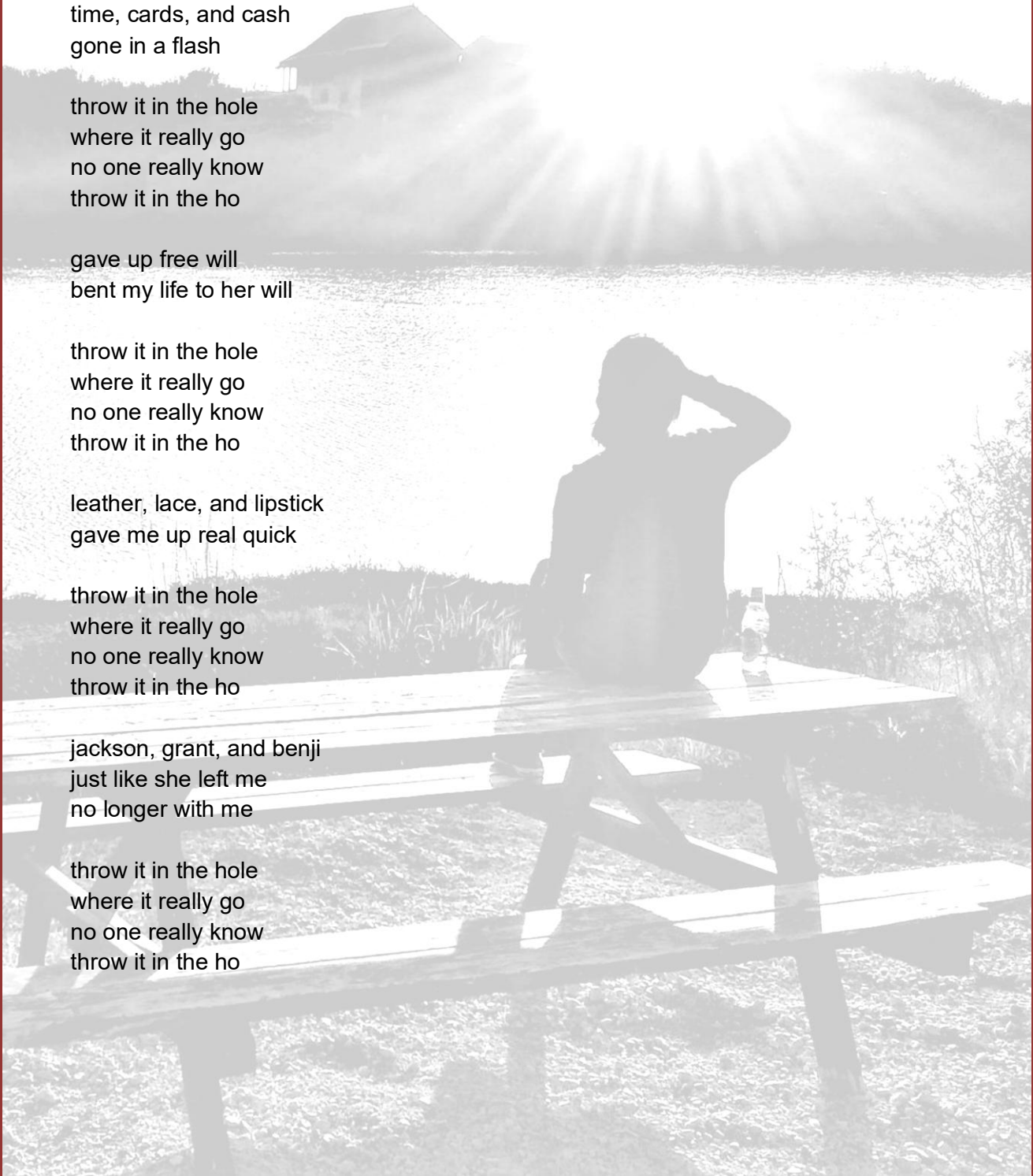
throw it in the hole  
where it really go  
no one really know  
throw it in the ho

leather, lace, and lipstick  
gave me up real quick

throw it in the hole  
where it really go  
no one really know  
throw it in the ho

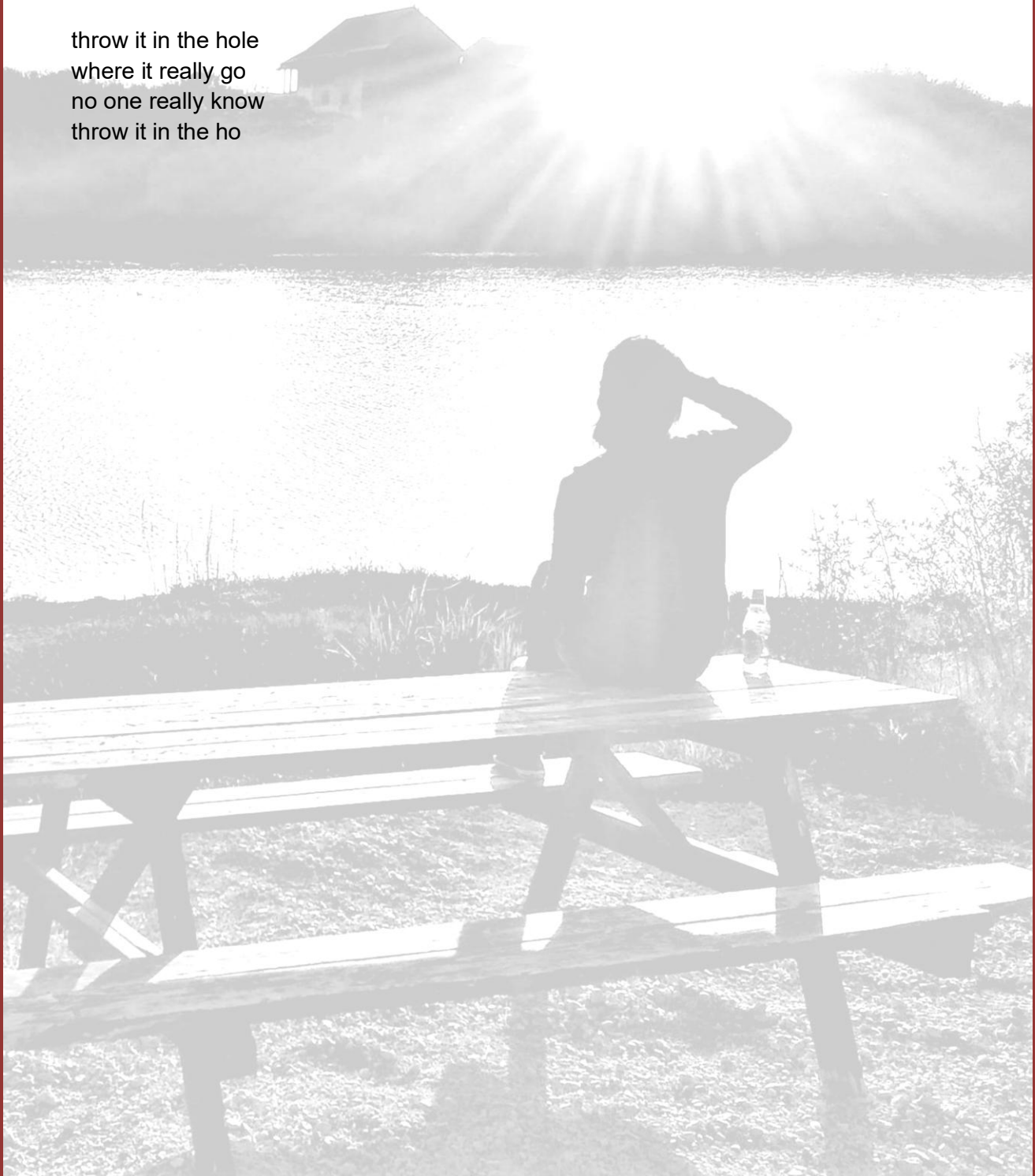
jackson, grant, and benji  
just like she left me  
no longer with me

throw it in the hole  
where it really go  
no one really know  
throw it in the ho



lessons for the young man  
love her like a goddess  
serve her like a queen  
but have her buy her own shit

throw it in the hole  
where it really go  
no one really know  
throw it in the ho





## 20230310.1 | heart break

i turned my son away today

he is not growing

he is not learning

he indulges all day long

and all night long

in drugs and alcohol

his anger and offensiveness

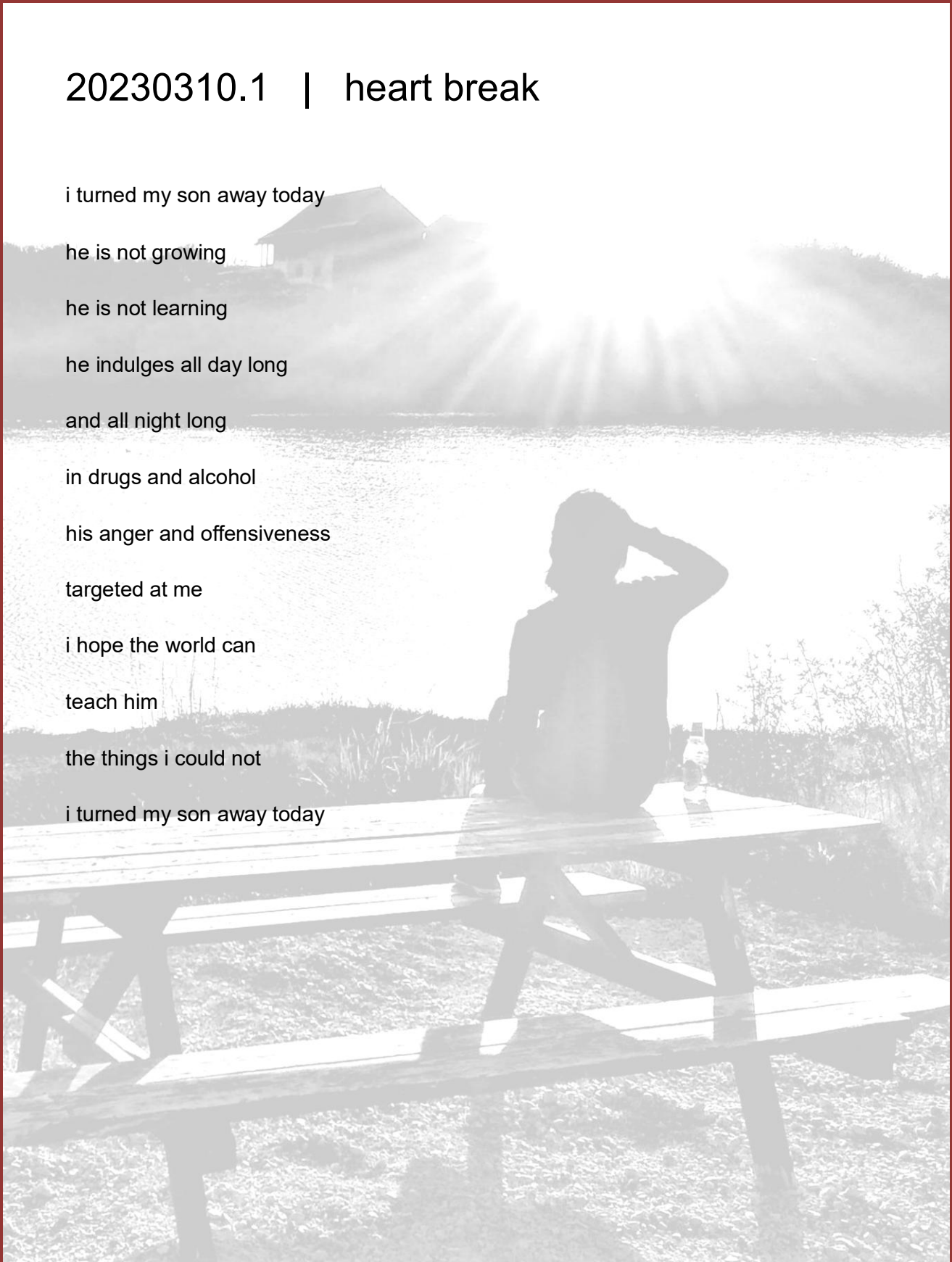
targeted at me

i hope the world can

teach him

the things i could not

i turned my son away today



## 20230614.1 | each new day

sam,

don't panic

don't worry

each new day

allows us to

make good choices

to make small steps

toward a better future

to a better self

it's okay to be human

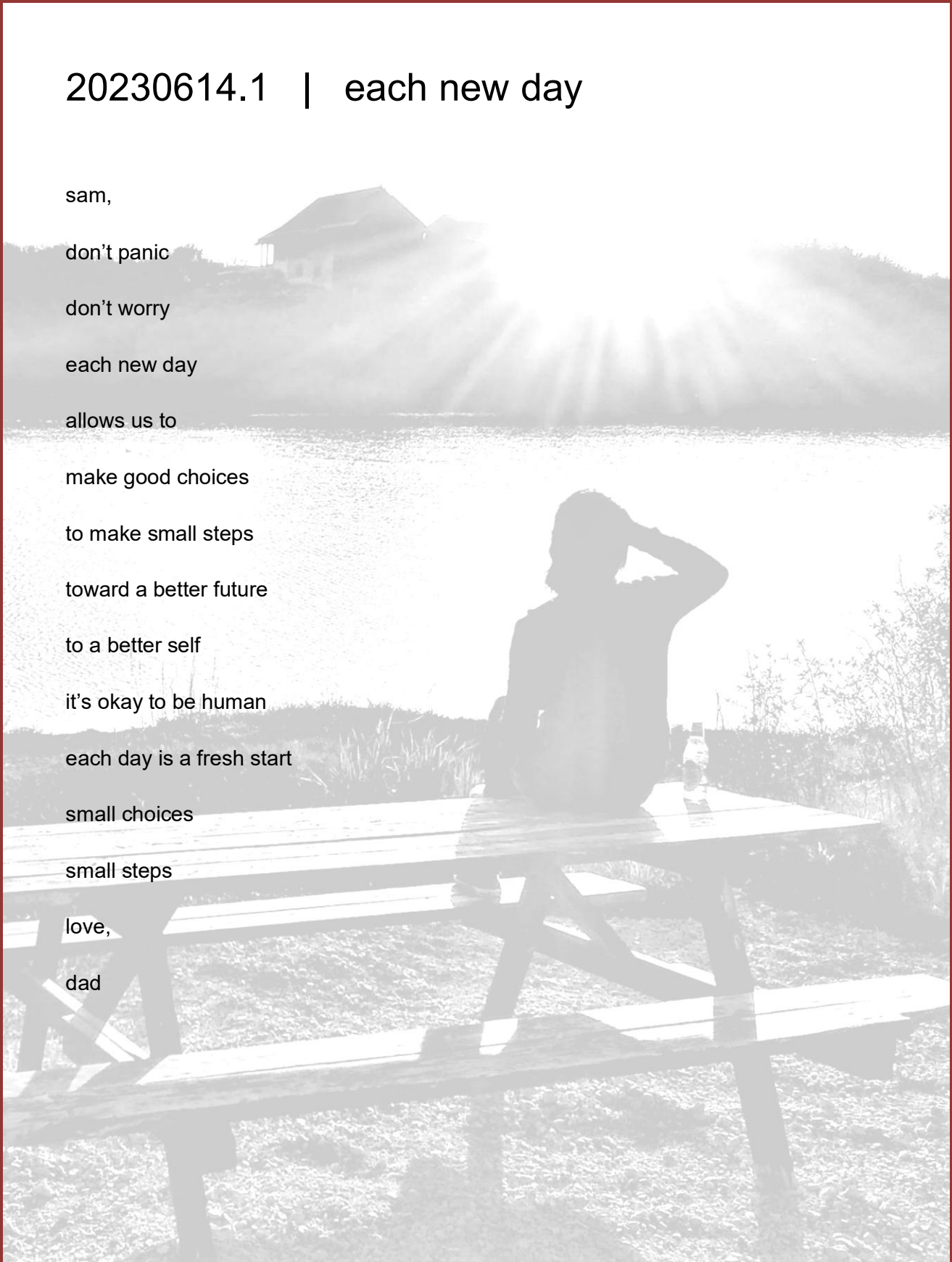
each day is a fresh start

small choices

small steps

love,

dad

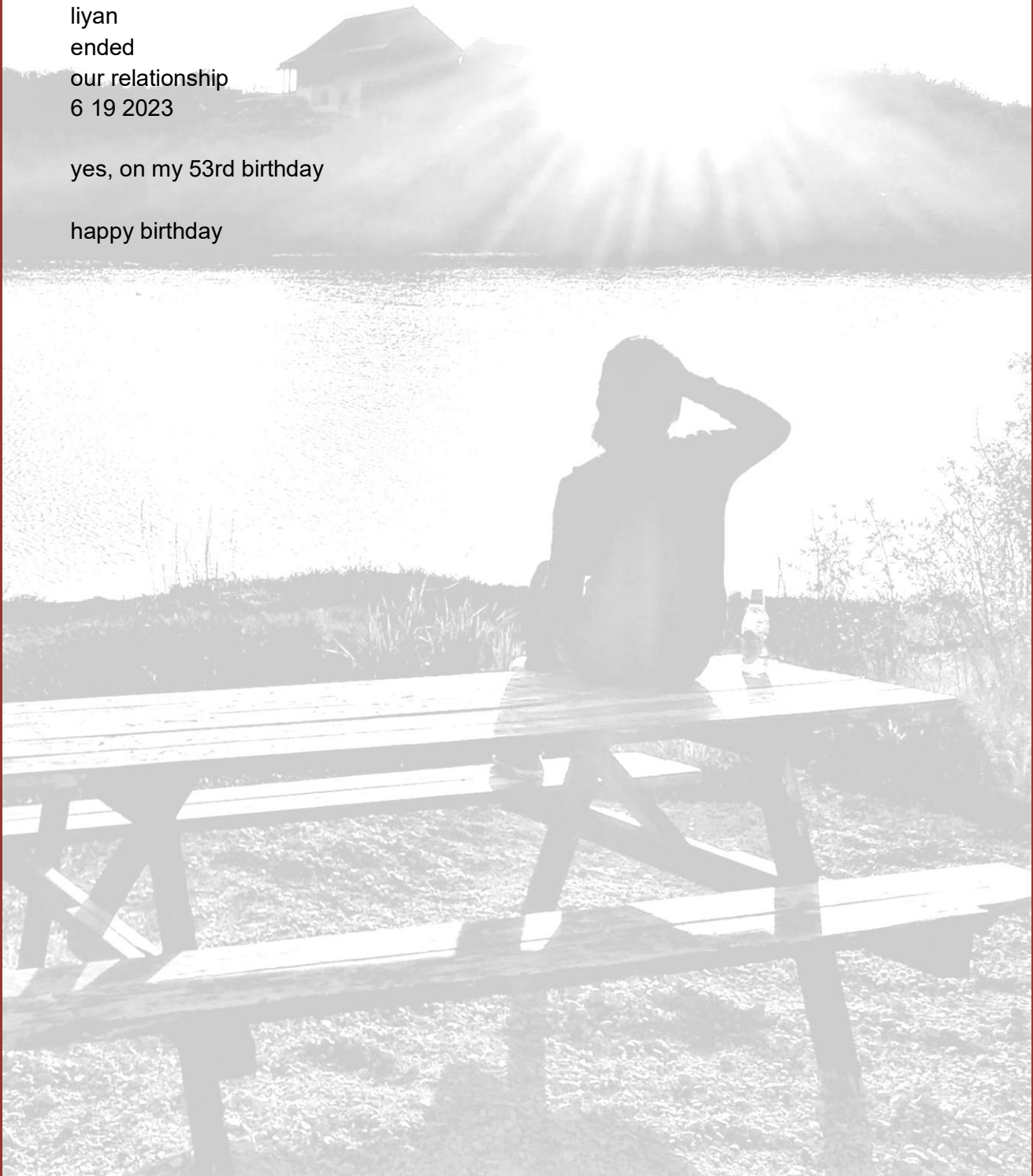


20230627.1 | ended

liyan  
ended  
our relationship  
6 19 2023

yes, on my 53rd birthday

happy birthday





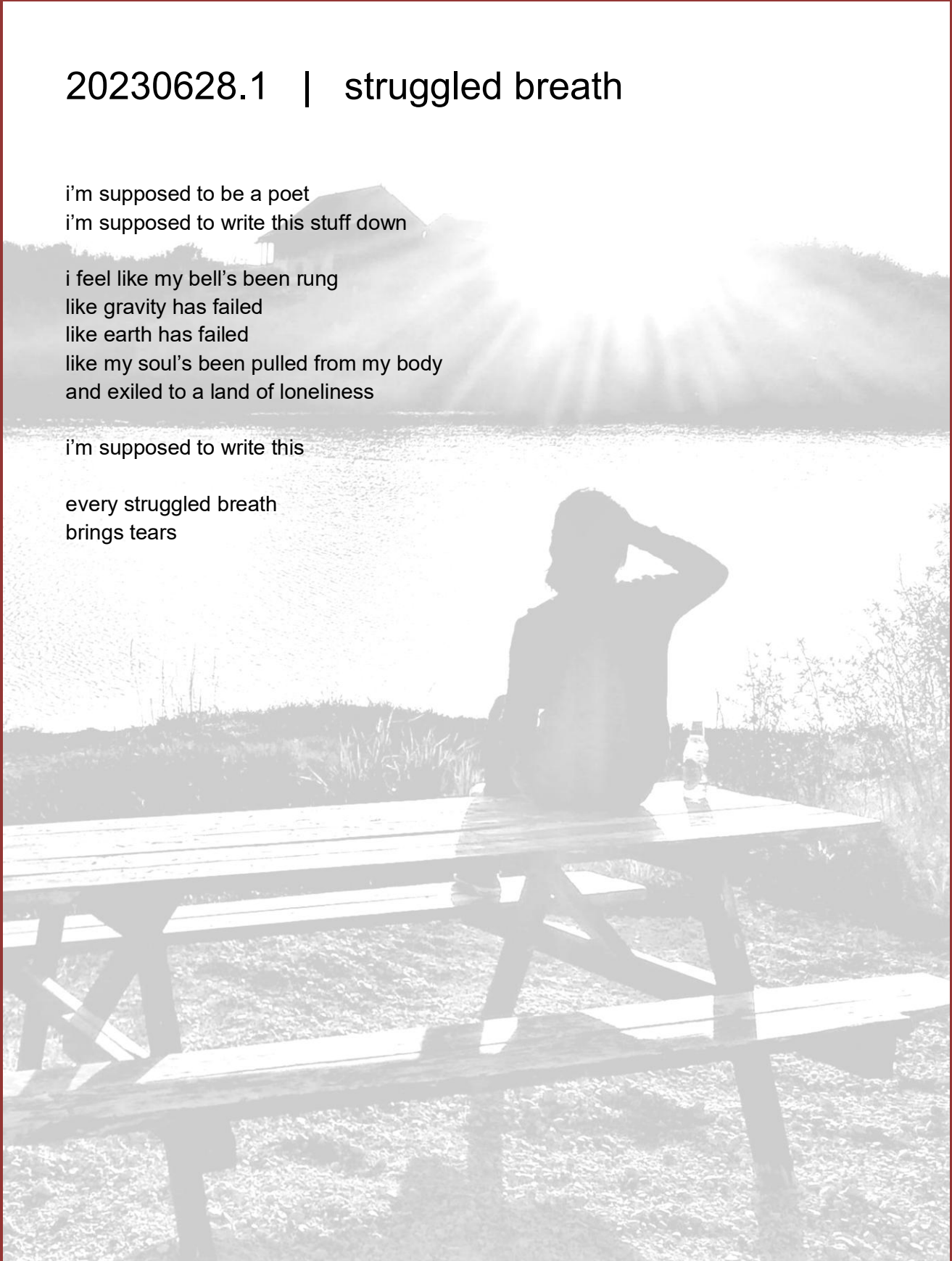
## 20230628.1 | struggled breath

i'm supposed to be a poet  
i'm supposed to write this stuff down

i feel like my bell's been rung  
like gravity has failed  
like earth has failed  
like my soul's been pulled from my body  
and exiled to a land of loneliness

i'm supposed to write this

every struggled breath  
brings tears



20230628.2 | grip hold

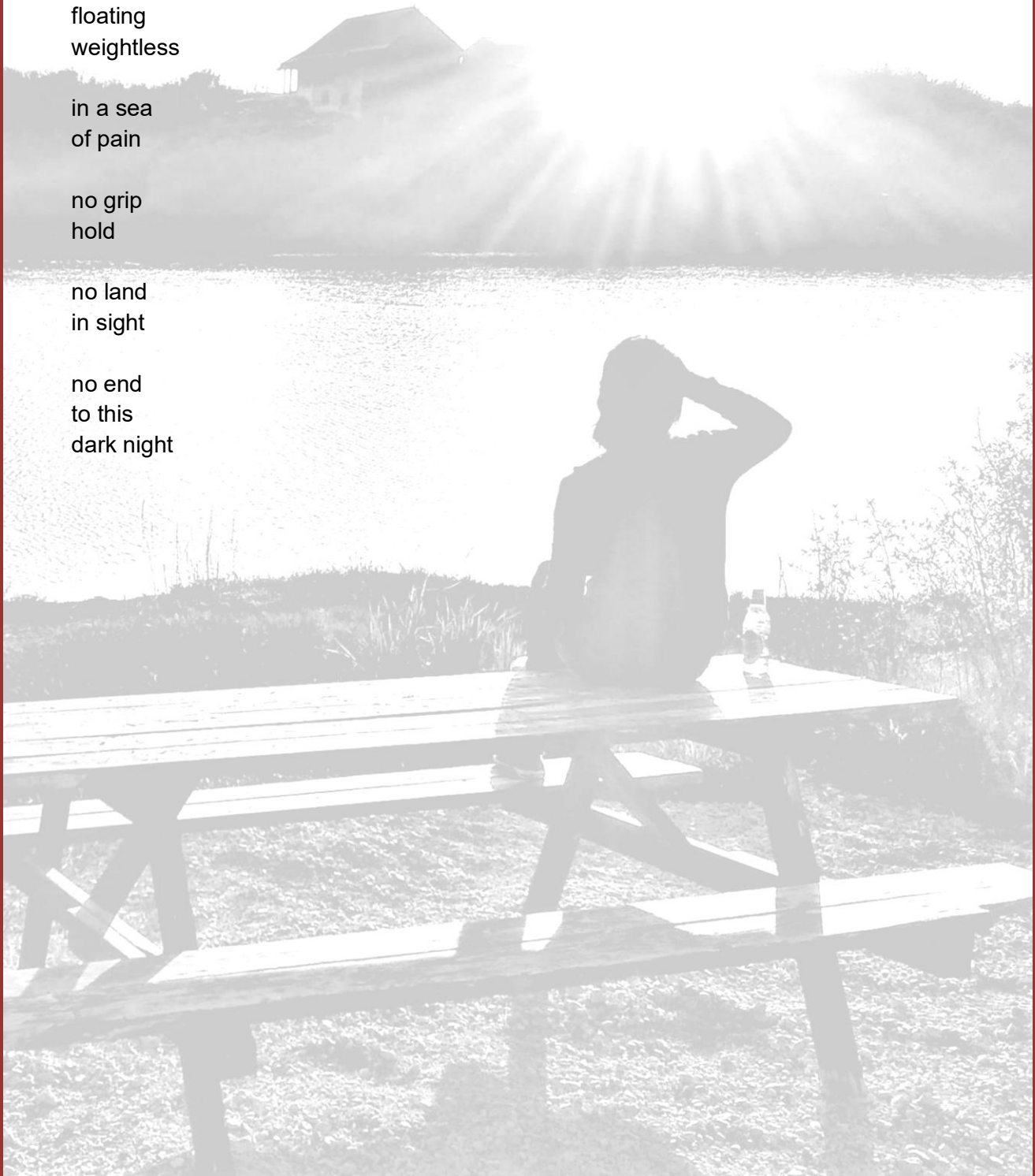
floating  
weightless

in a sea  
of pain

no grip  
hold

no land  
in sight

no end  
to this  
dark night



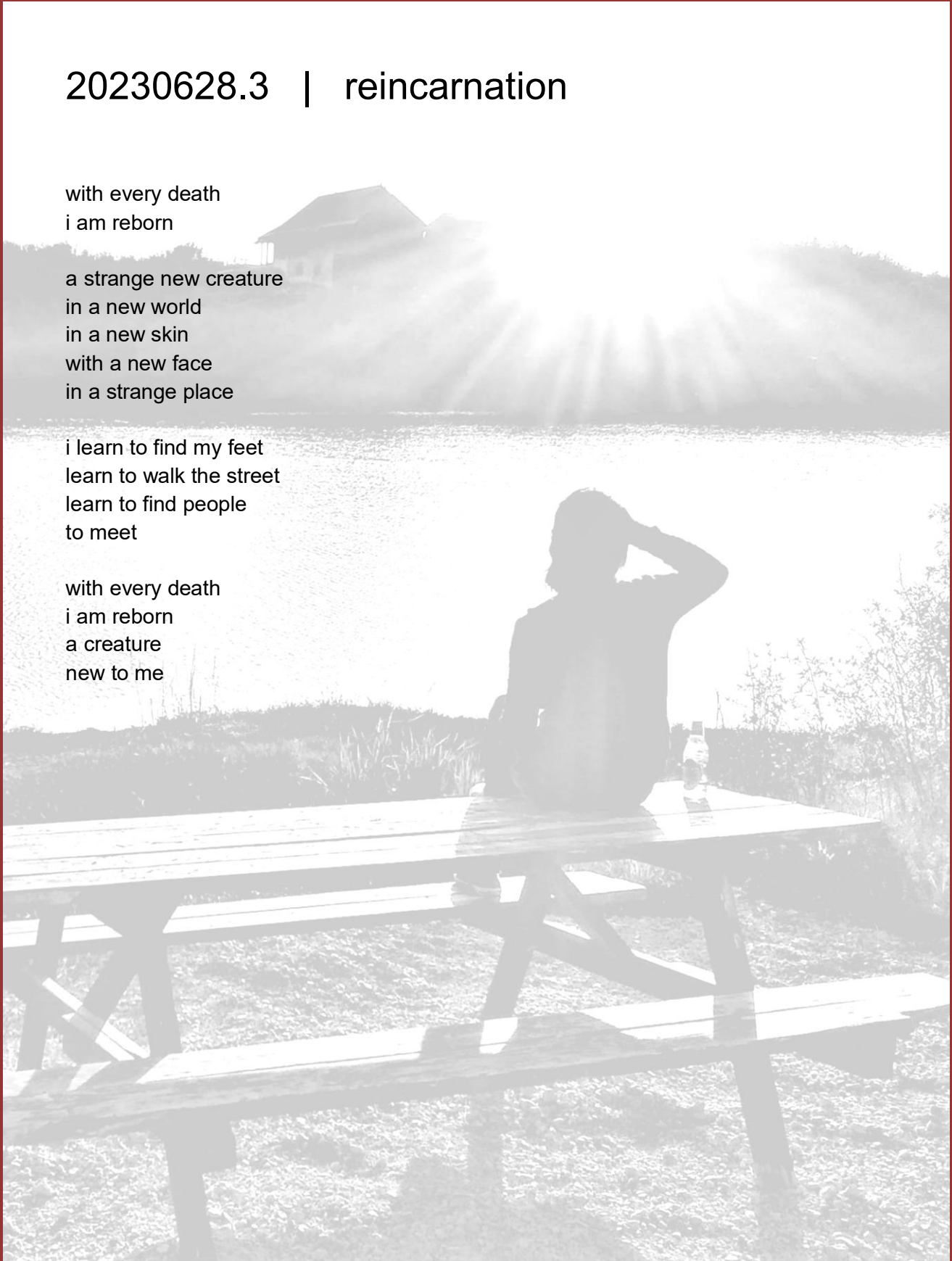
## 20230628.3 | reincarnation

with every death  
i am reborn

a strange new creature  
in a new world  
in a new skin  
with a new face  
in a strange place

i learn to find my feet  
learn to walk the street  
learn to find people  
to meet

with every death  
i am reborn  
a creature  
new to me





## 20230628.4 | the new pattern

the meadow grasses grow

the wandering deer go

the moose moves slow

i stand

witness

the sun and moon

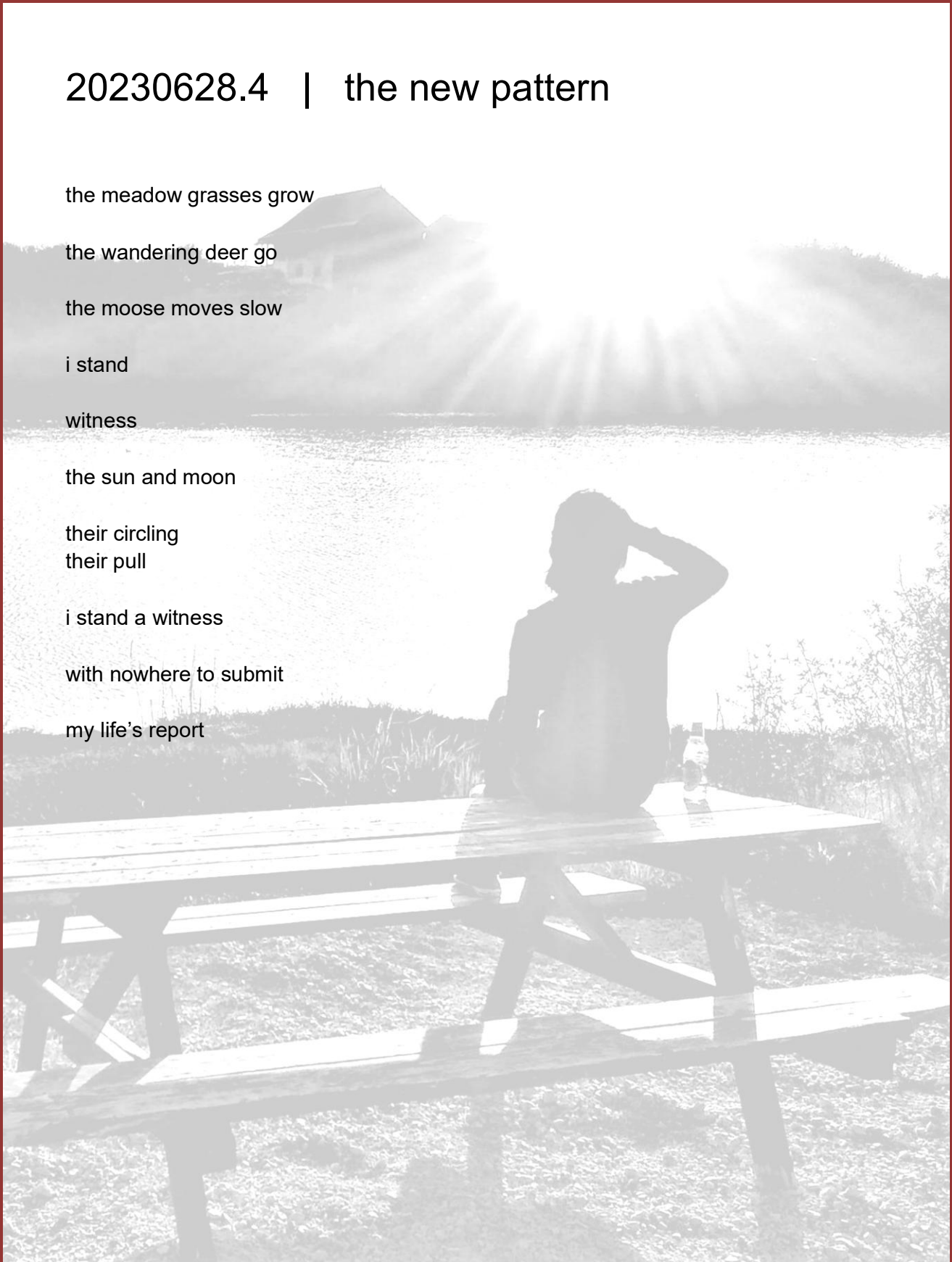
their circling

their pull

i stand a witness

with nowhere to submit

my life's report



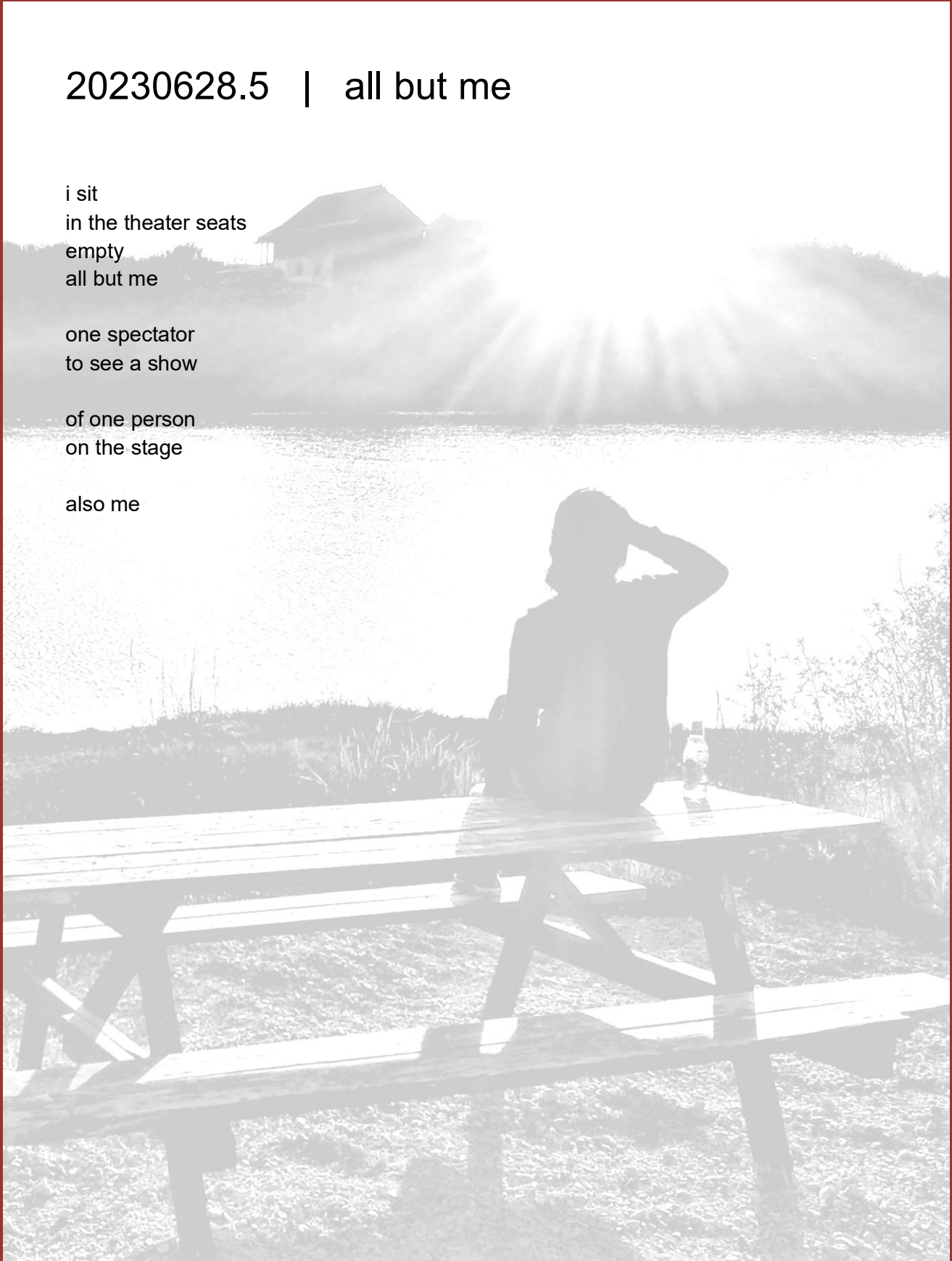
20230628.5 | all but me

i sit  
in the theater seats  
empty  
all but me

one spectator  
to see a show

of one person  
on the stage

also me



## 20230628.6 | stages of grief

stages of grief

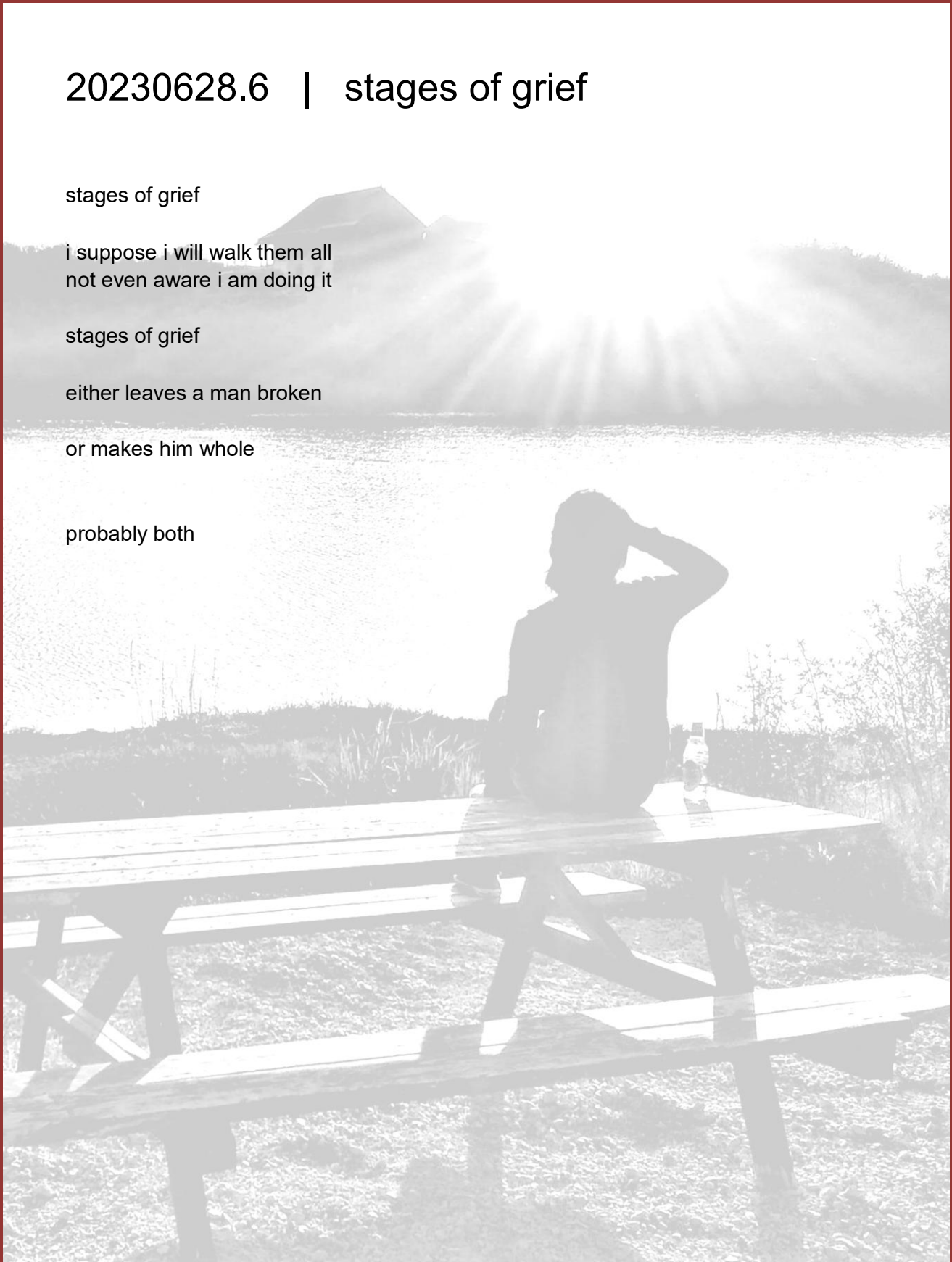
i suppose i will walk them all  
not even aware i am doing it

stages of grief

either leaves a man broken

or makes him whole

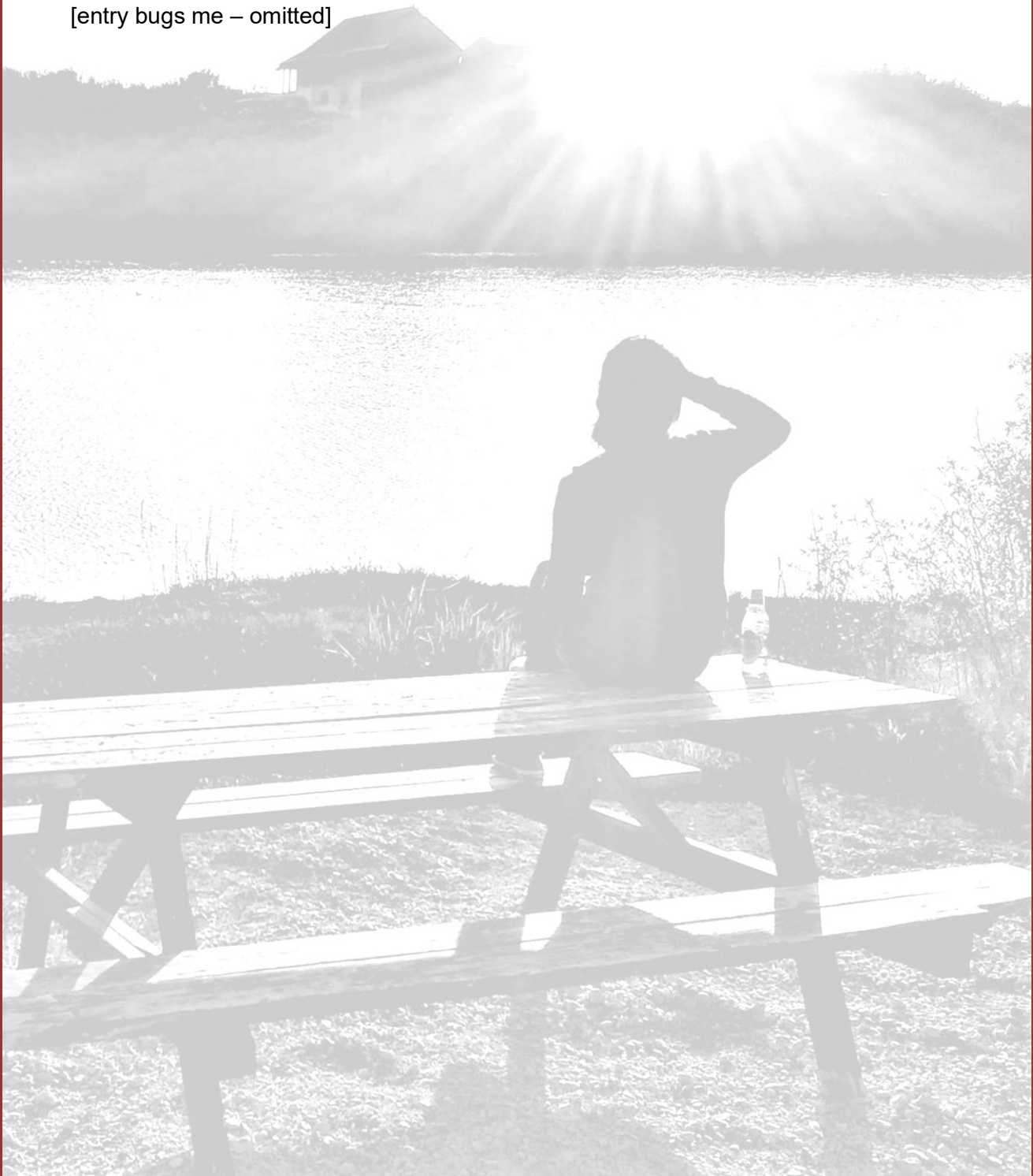
probably both





20230628.7 | bs omitted

[entry bugs me – omitted]



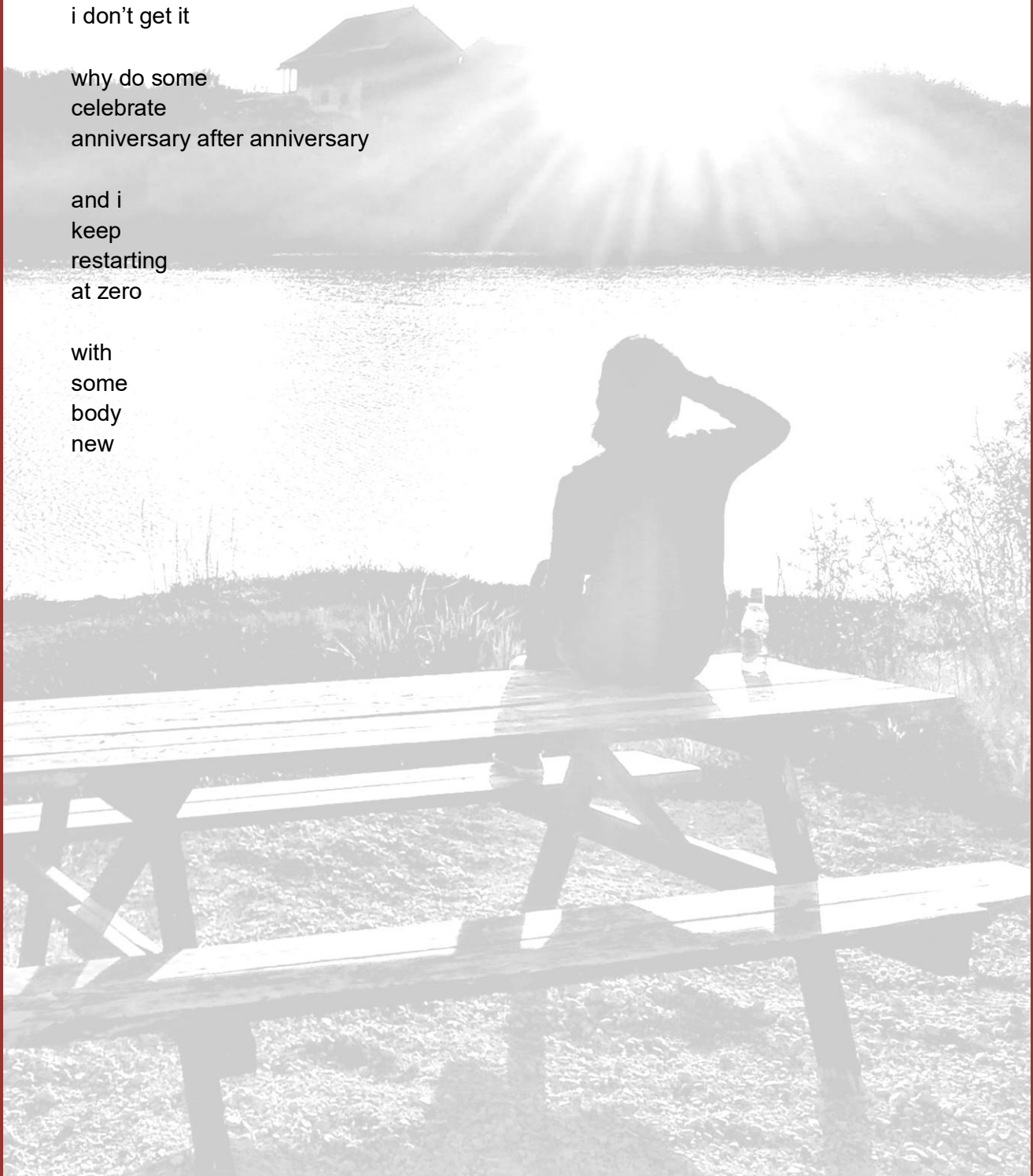
20230628.8 | some body new

i don't get it

why do some  
celebrate  
anniversary after anniversary

and i  
keep  
restarting  
at zero

with  
some  
body  
new



20230628.9 | homeless like me

i am drawn

to artists

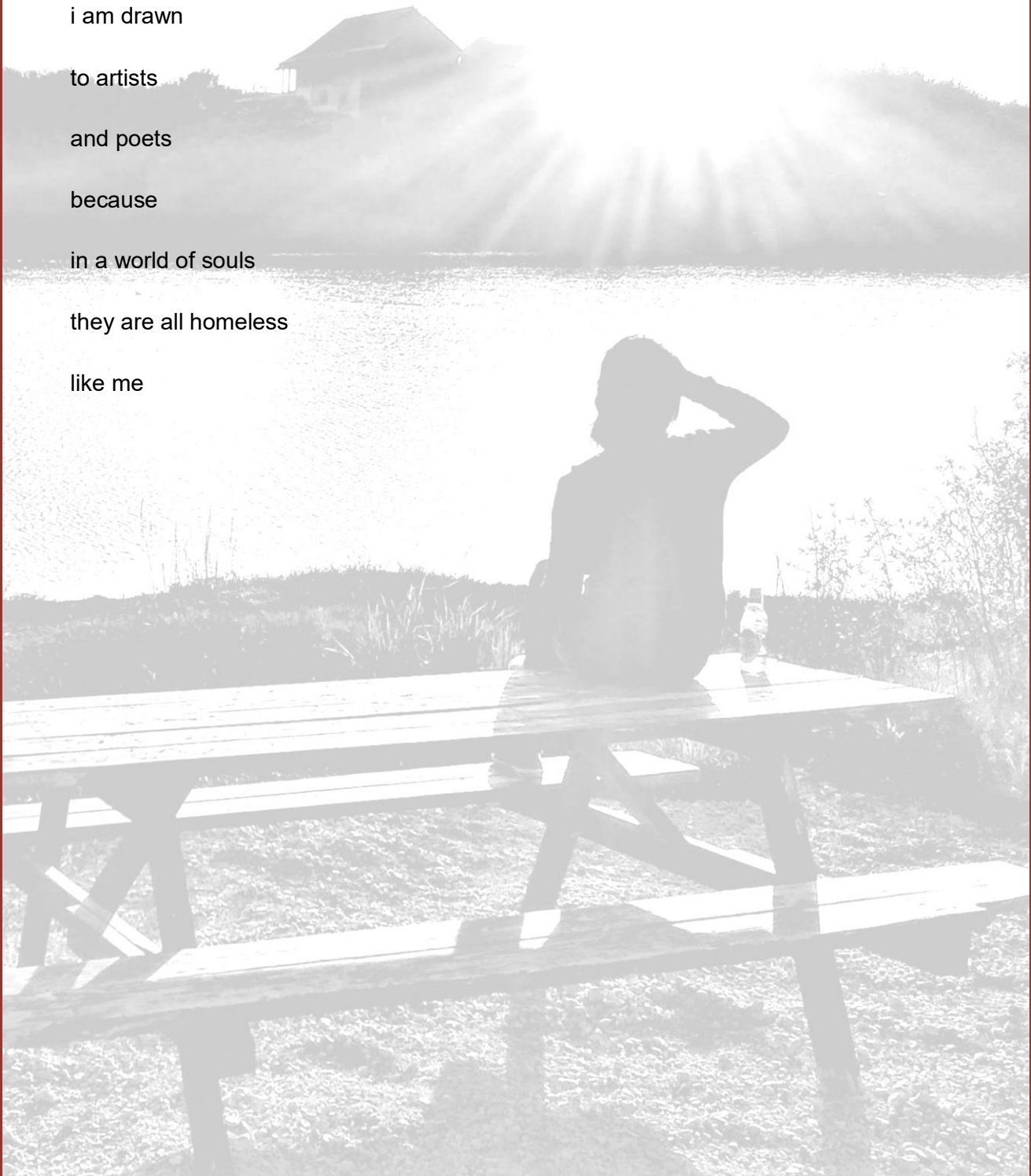
and poets

because

in a world of souls

they are all homeless

like me





20230630.1 | pendulum

she is closed

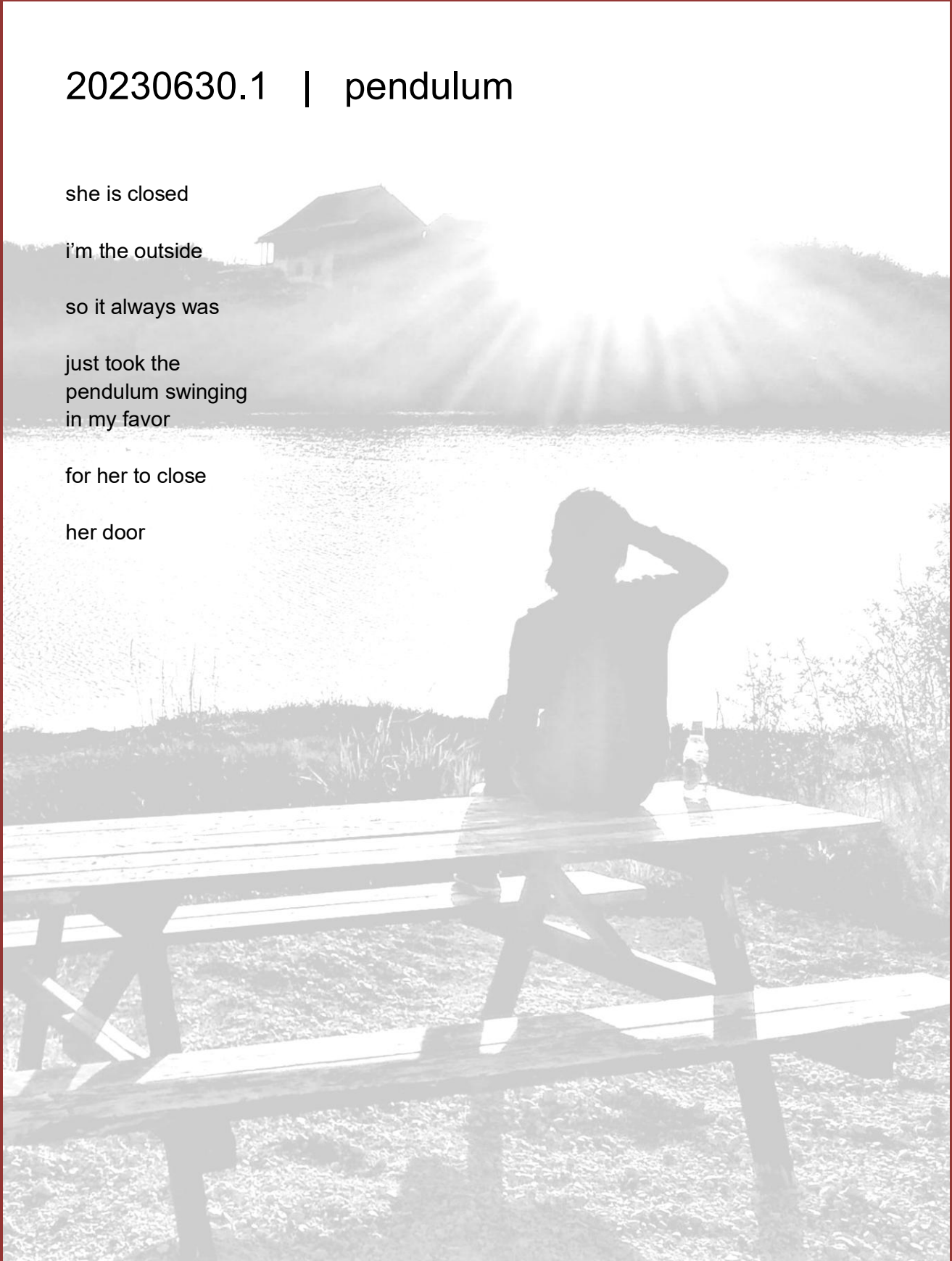
i'm the outside

so it always was

just took the  
pendulum swinging  
in my favor

for her to close

her door



## 20230630.2 | a beautiful thing

a magpie's caw  
is shrill  
and short

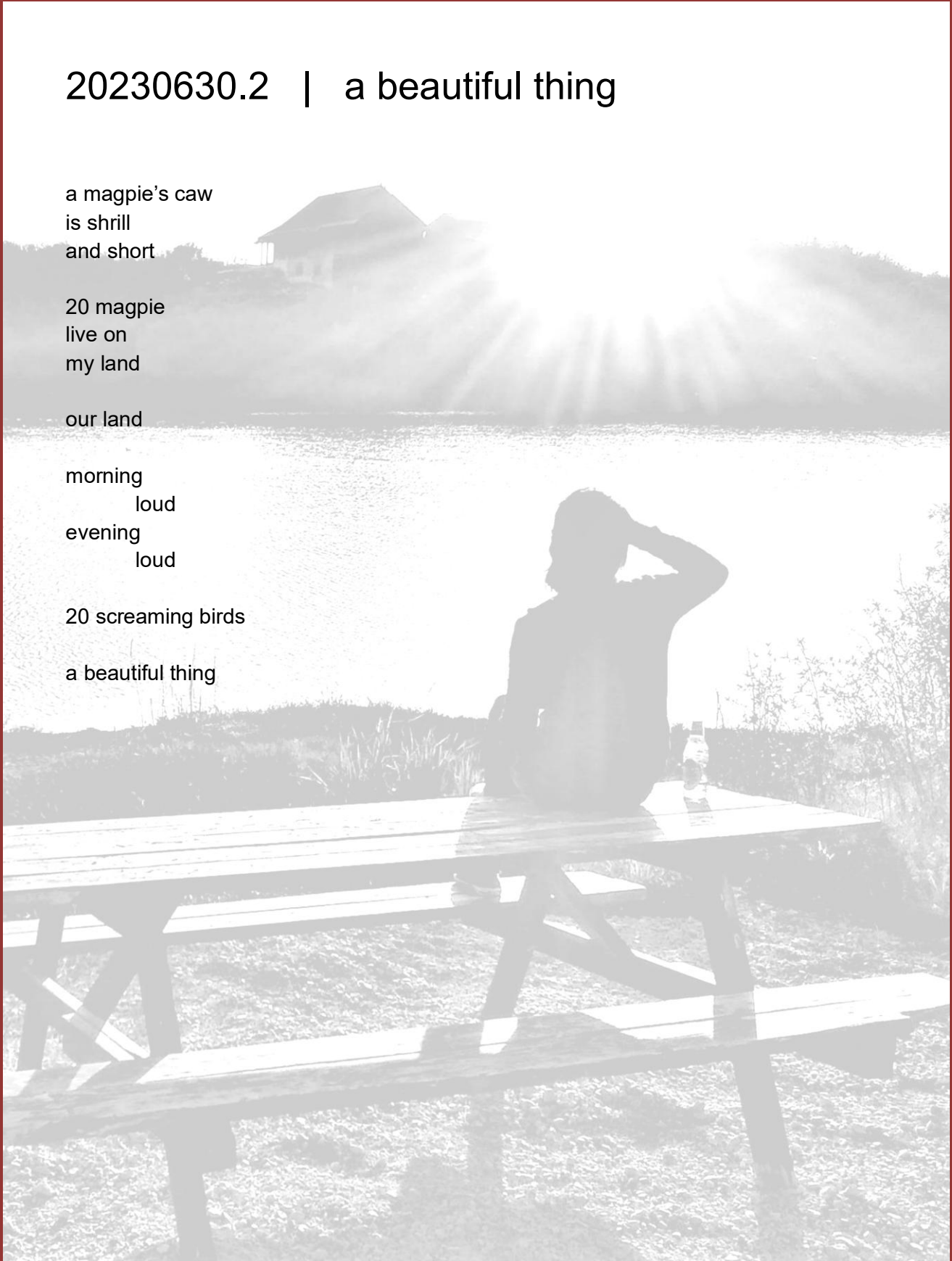
20 magpie  
live on  
my land

our land

morning  
    loud  
evening  
    loud

20 screaming birds

a beautiful thing



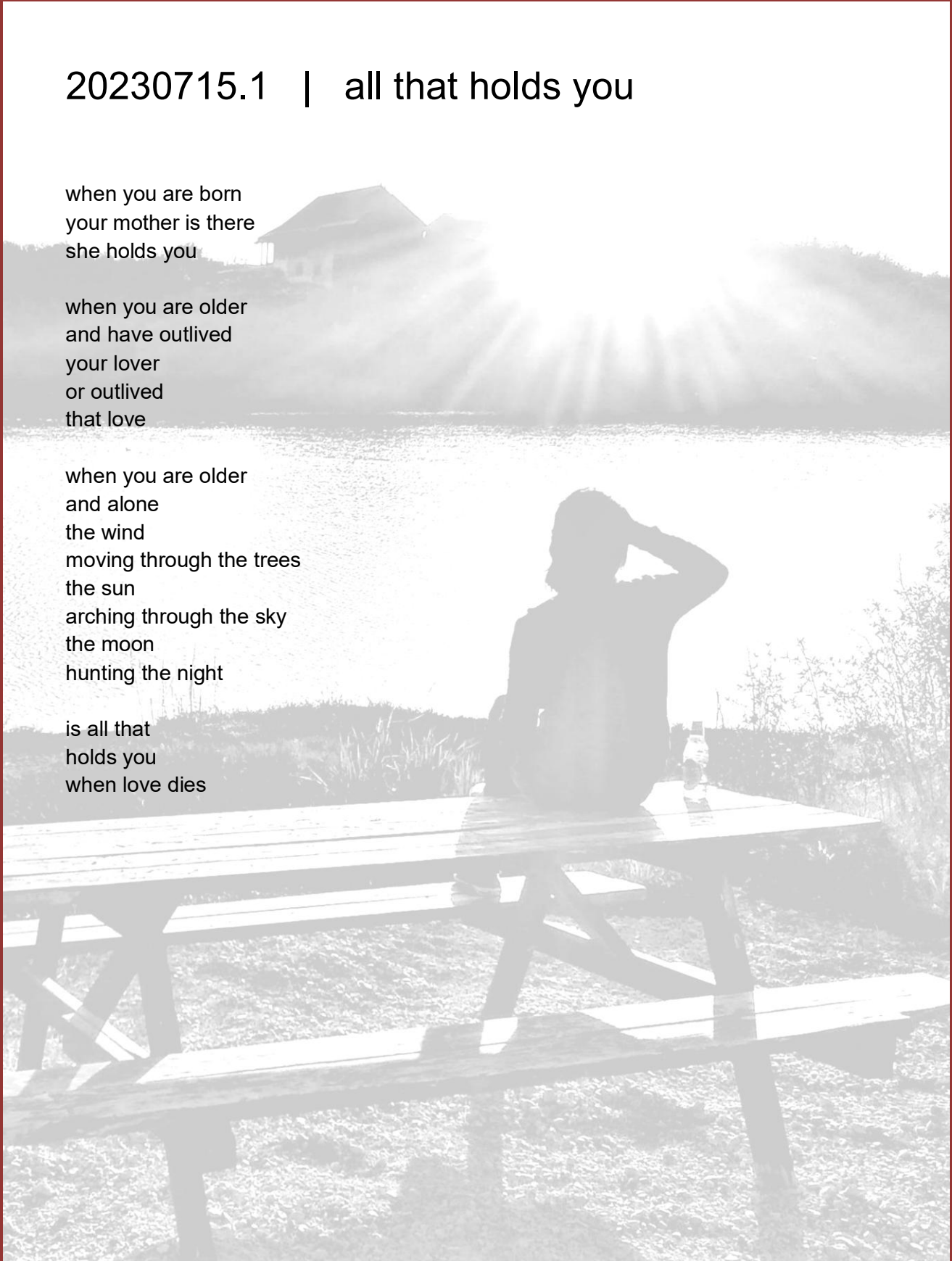
## 20230715.1 | all that holds you

when you are born  
your mother is there  
she holds you

when you are older  
and have outlived  
your lover  
or outlived  
that love

when you are older  
and alone  
the wind  
moving through the trees  
the sun  
arching through the sky  
the moon  
hunting the night

is all that  
holds you  
when love dies





20230715.2 | in a lover's arms

i

doubt

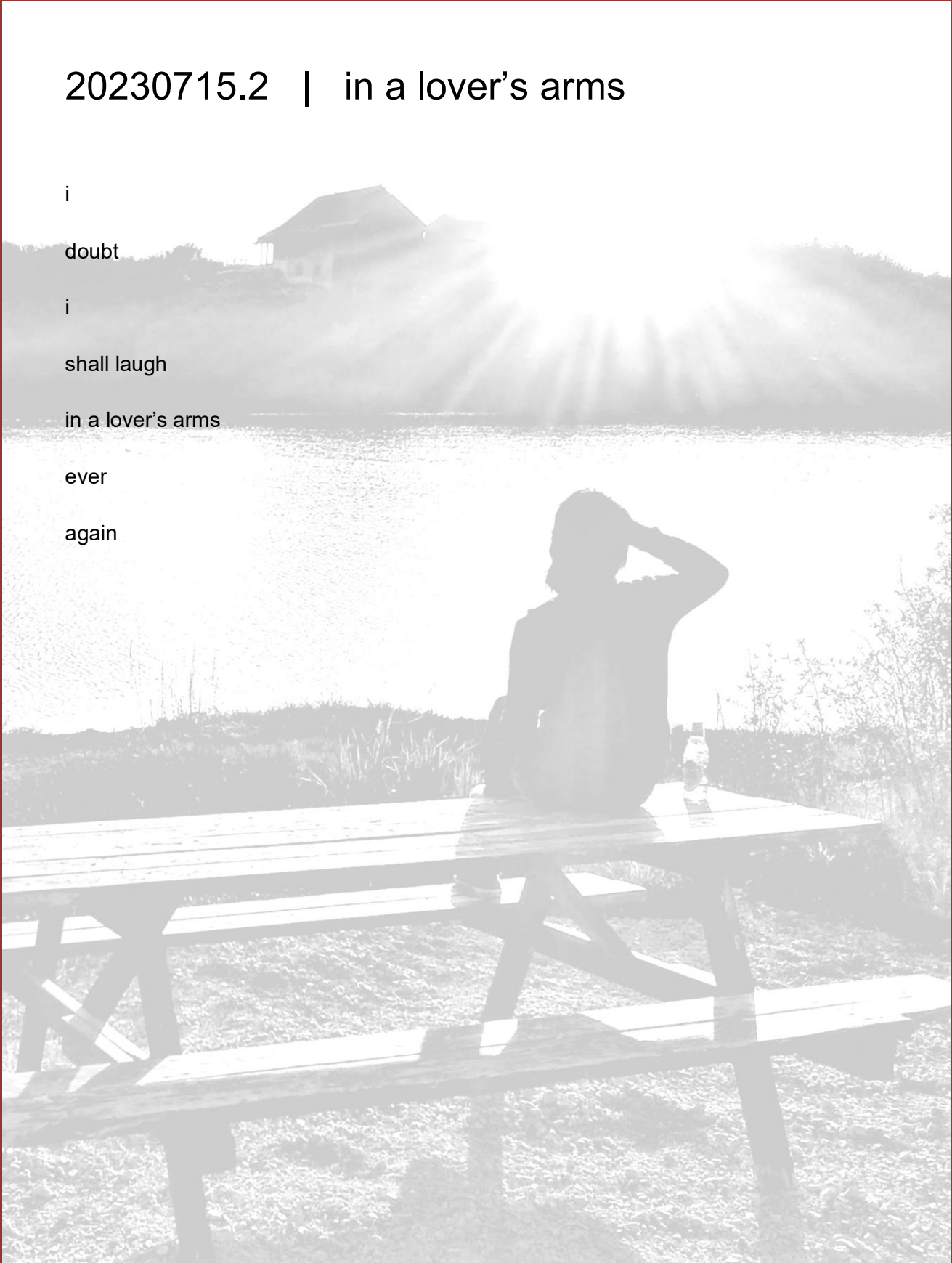
i

shall laugh

in a lover's arms

ever

again



## 20230715.3 | bonus time

every person is to accomplish five things in this life

survive childhood

become an adult

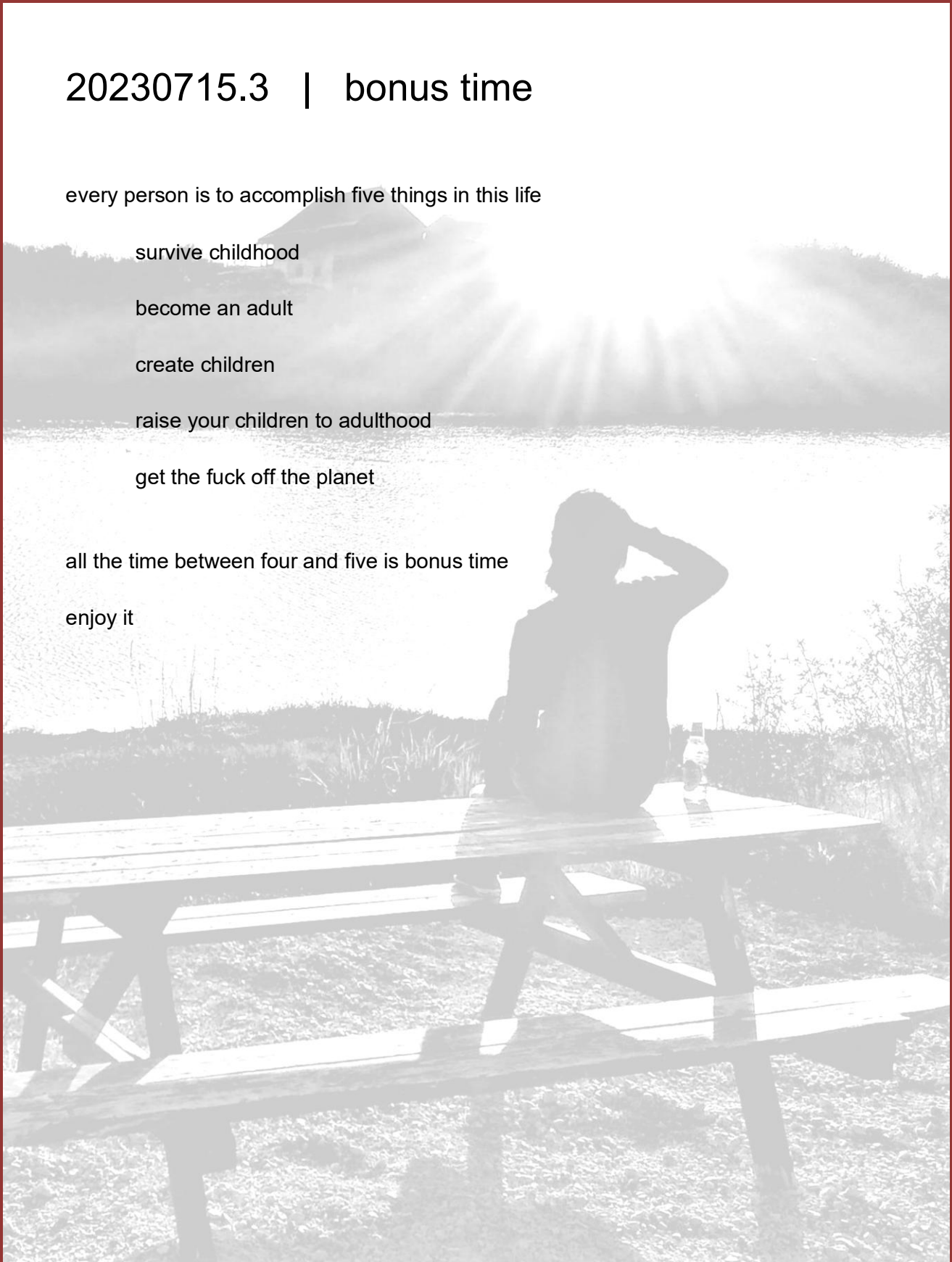
create children

raise your children to adulthood

get the fuck off the planet

all the time between four and five is bonus time

enjoy it



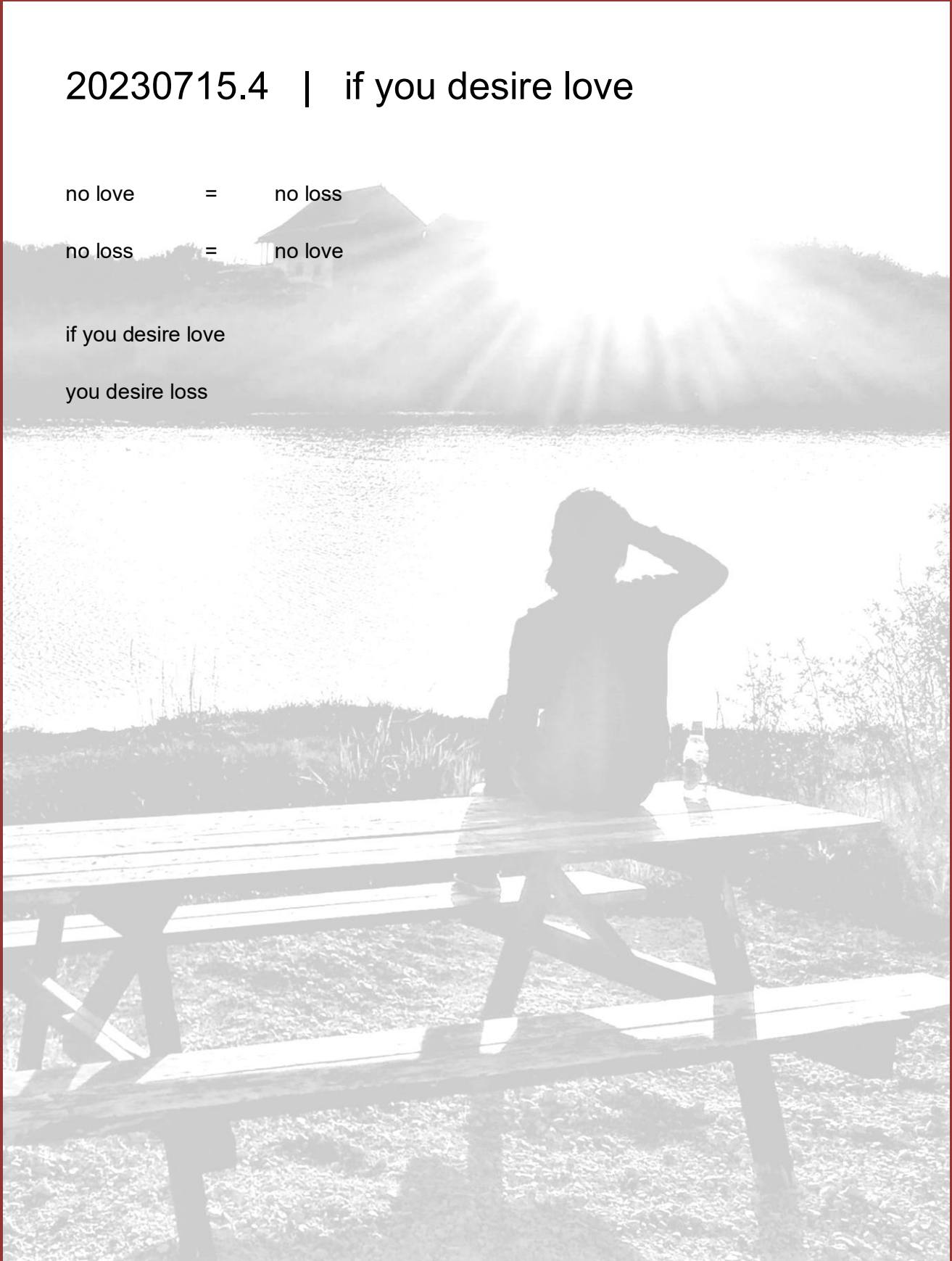
20230715.4 | if you desire love

no love = no loss

no loss = no love

if you desire love

you desire loss

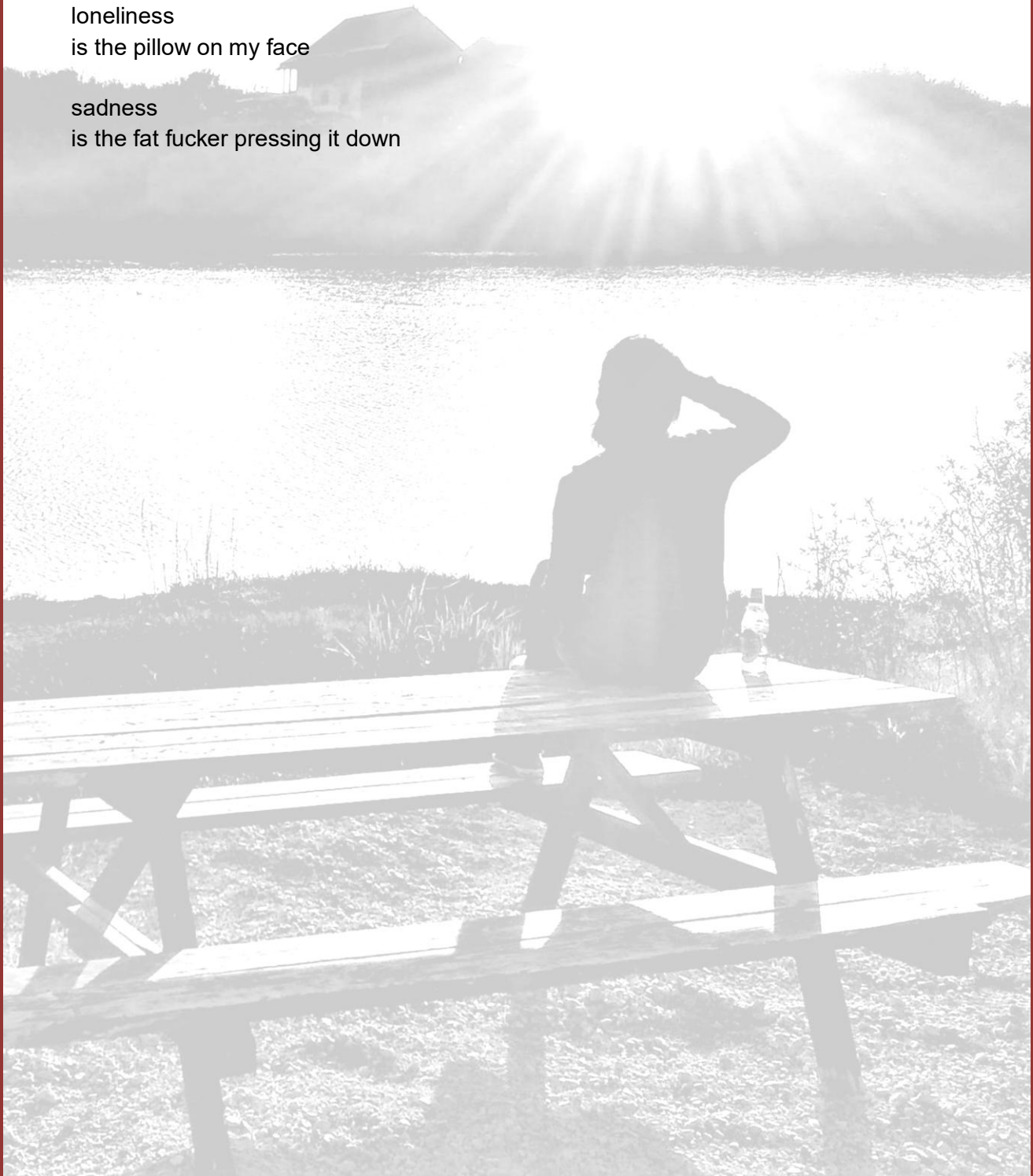




20230715.5 | fat fucker

loneliness  
is the pillow on my face

sadness  
is the fat fucker pressing it down



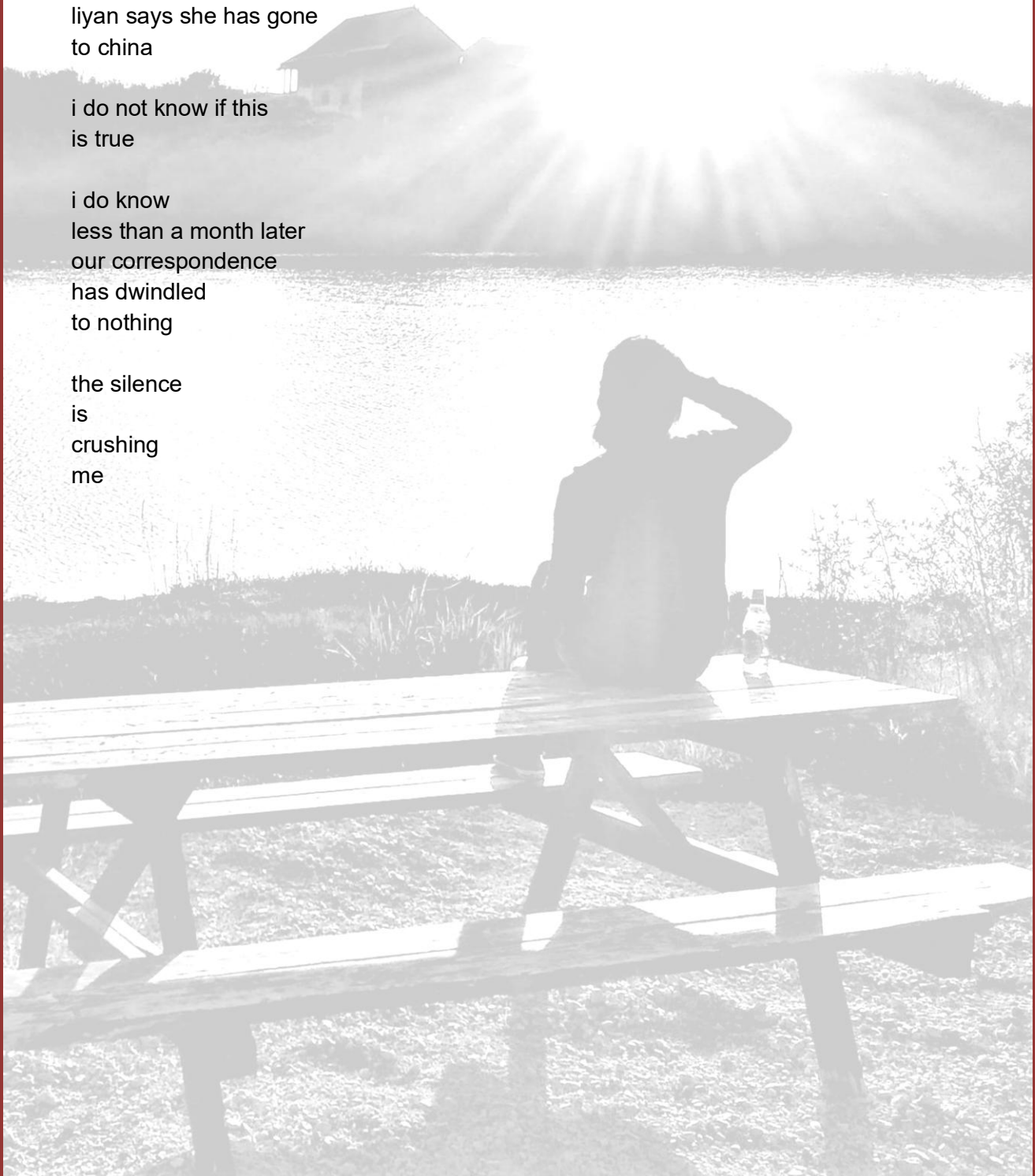
20230716.1 | unknown

liyan says she has gone  
to china

i do not know if this  
is true

i do know  
less than a month later  
our correspondence  
has dwindled  
to nothing

the silence  
is  
crushing  
me



## 20230728.1 | everyone is searching

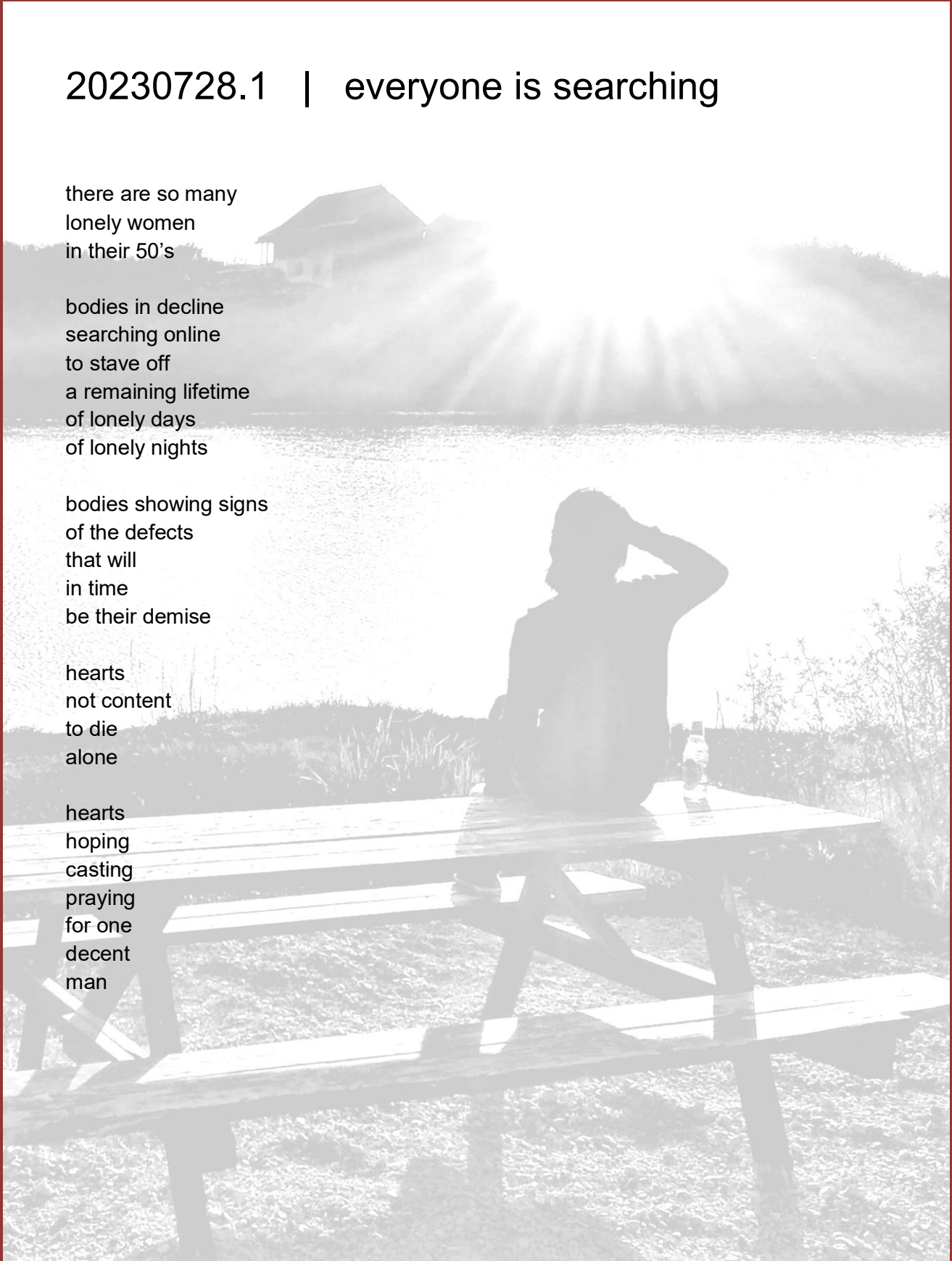
there are so many  
lonely women  
in their 50's

bodies in decline  
searching online  
to stave off  
a remaining lifetime  
of lonely days  
of lonely nights

bodies showing signs  
of the defects  
that will  
in time  
be their demise

hearts  
not content  
to die  
alone

hearts  
hoping  
casting  
praying  
for one  
decent  
man





## 20230728.2 | in the trees

i have lived  
two months now  
outdoors  
on this mountainside

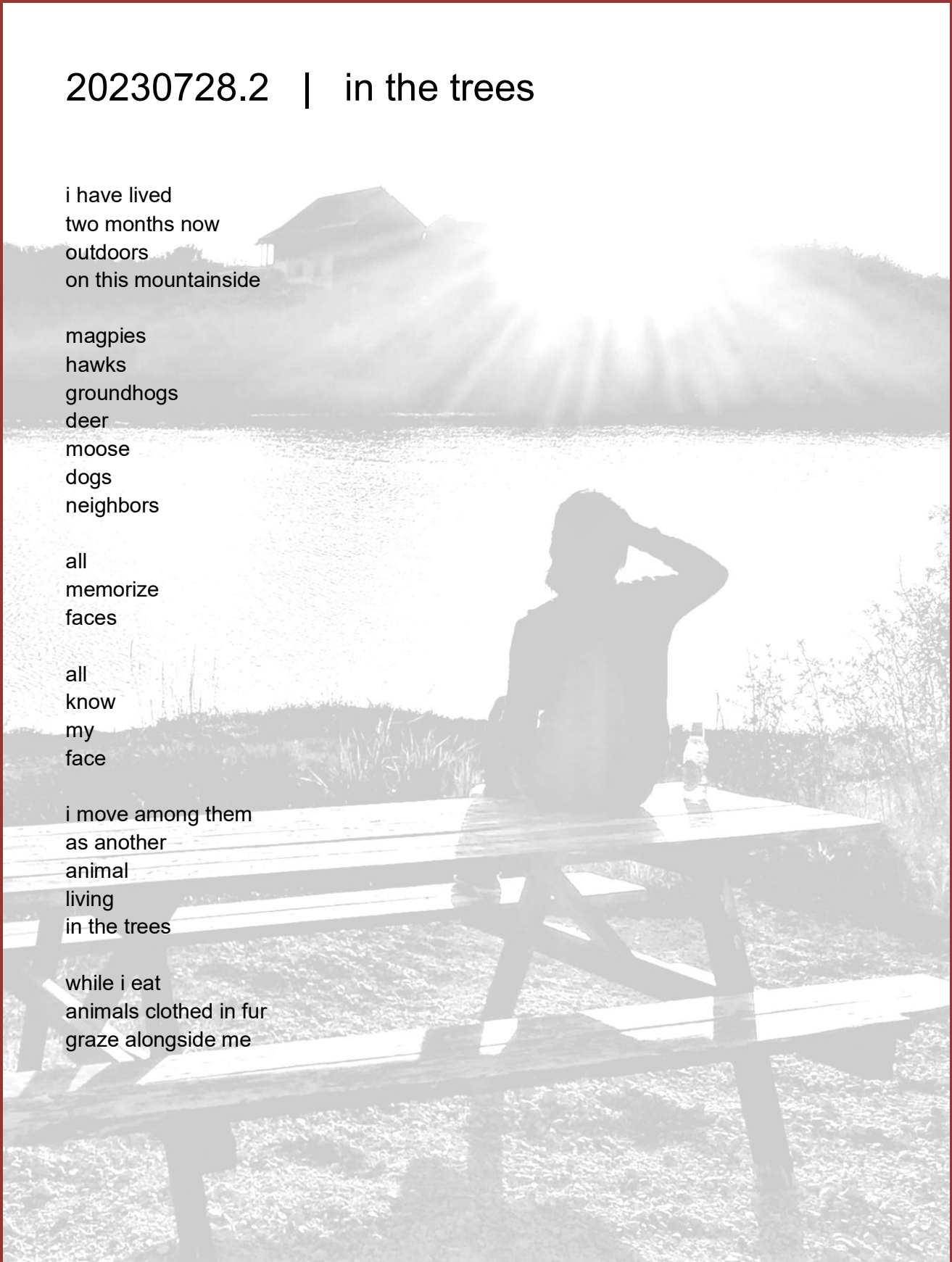
magpies  
hawks  
groundhogs  
deer  
moose  
dogs  
neighbors

all  
memorize  
faces

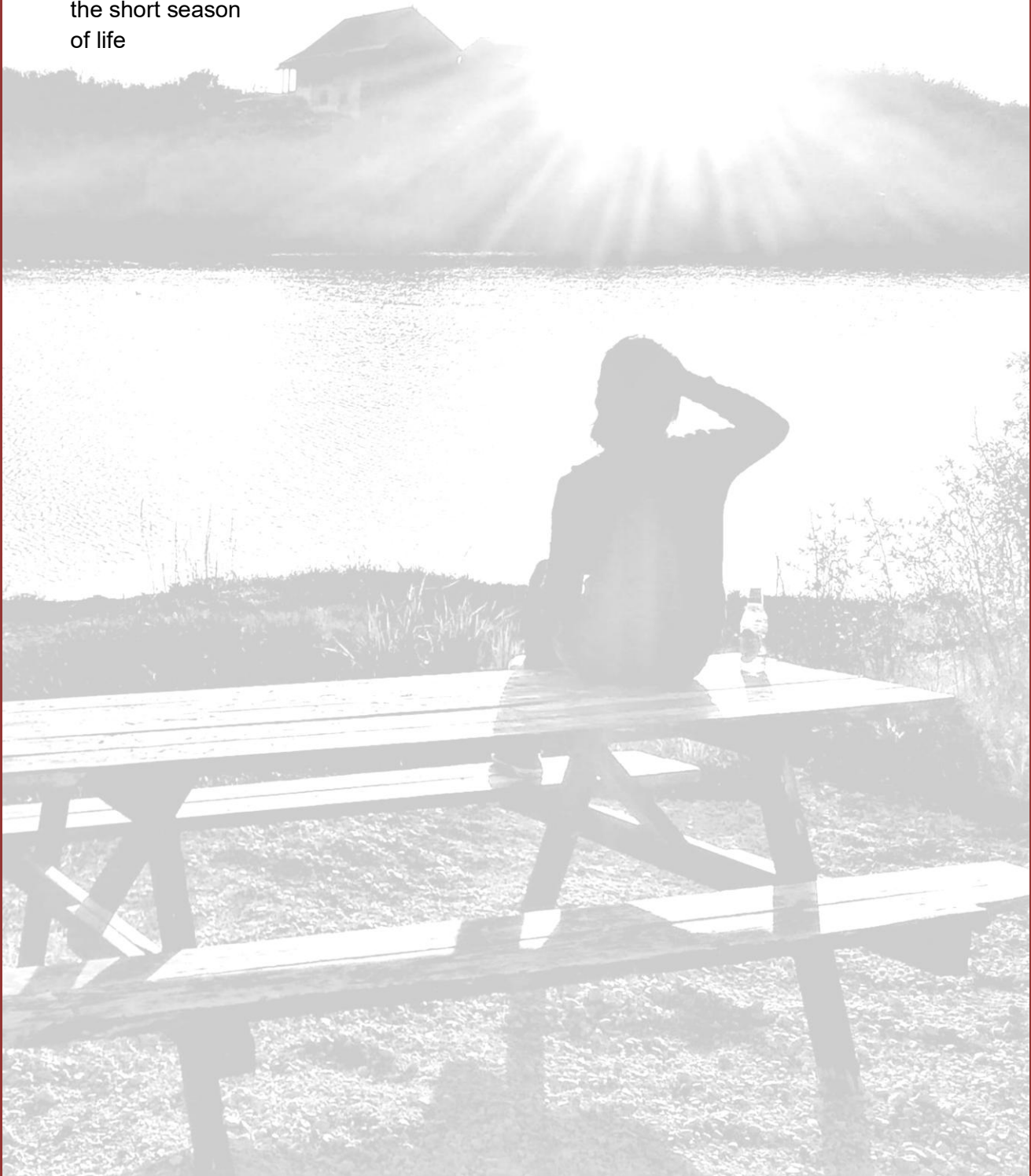
all  
know  
my  
face

i move among them  
as another  
animal  
living  
in the trees

while i eat  
animals clothed in fur  
graze alongside me



i am numbered  
among the animals  
burning each day  
of the short summer  
the short season  
of life



20230728.3 | in the wind

she is in the wind

she is her's

no longer mine

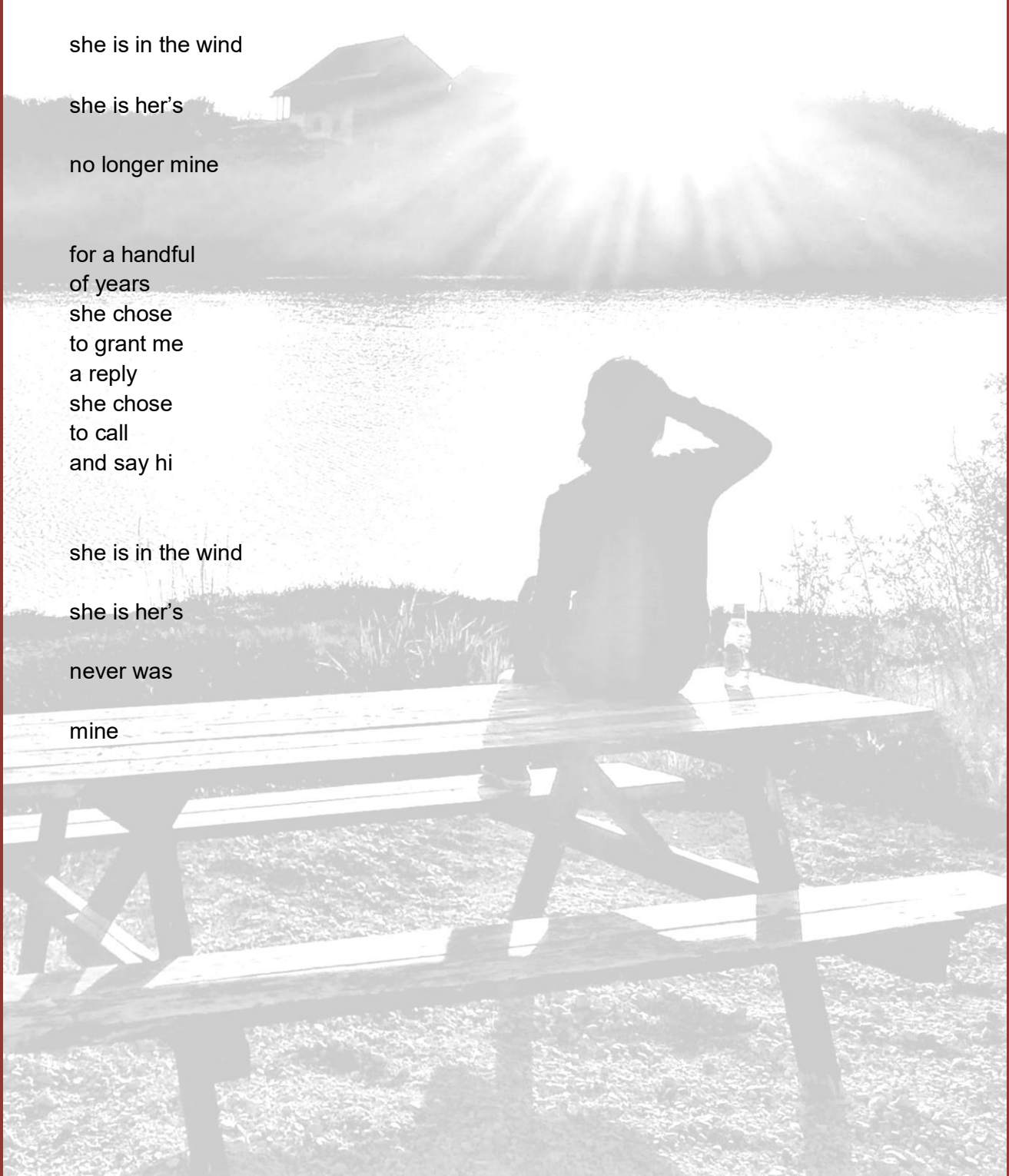
for a handful  
of years  
she chose  
to grant me  
a reply  
she chose  
to call  
and say hi

she is in the wind

she is her's

never was

mine





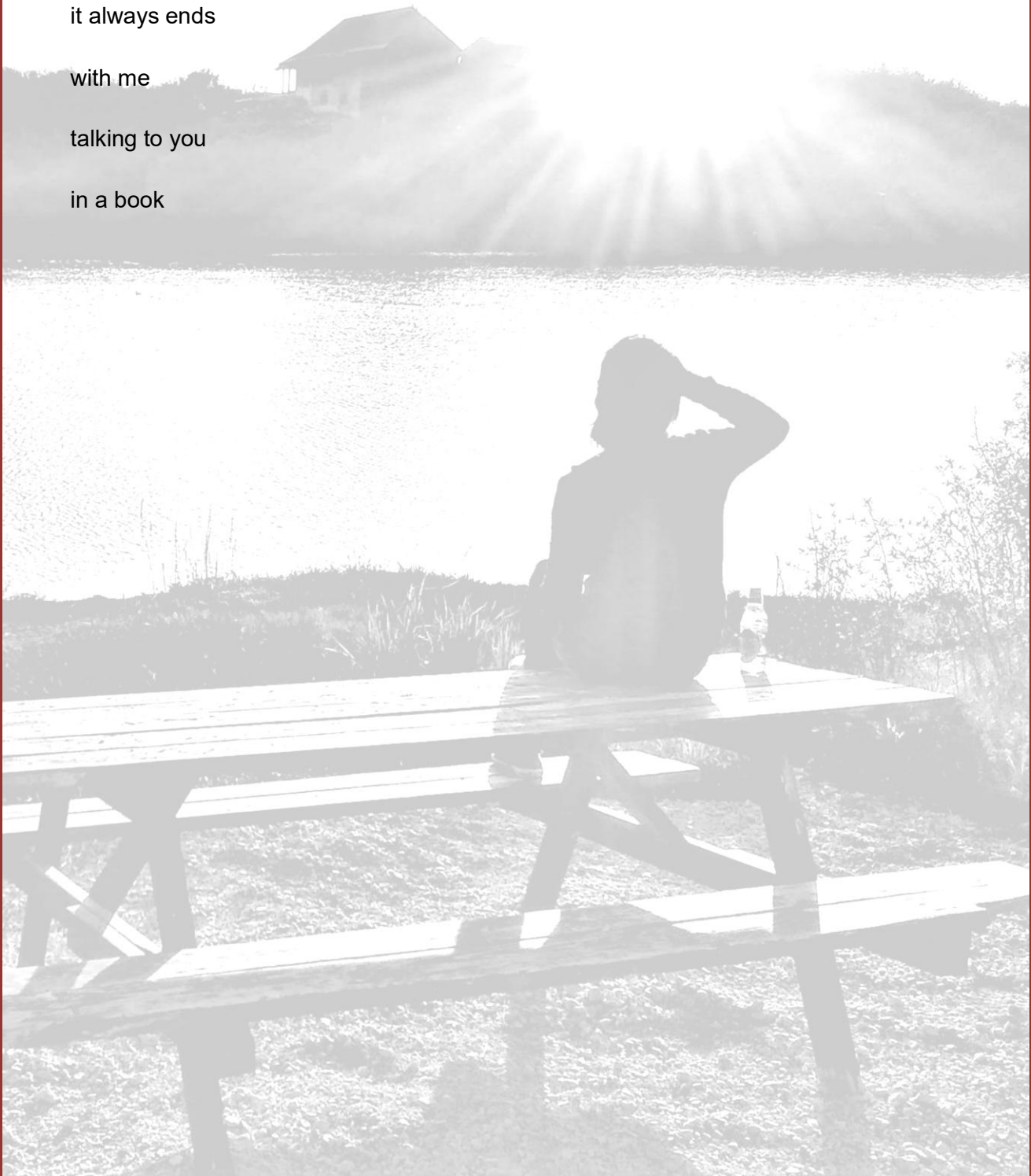
20230728.4 | same ending

it always ends

with me

talking to you

in a book



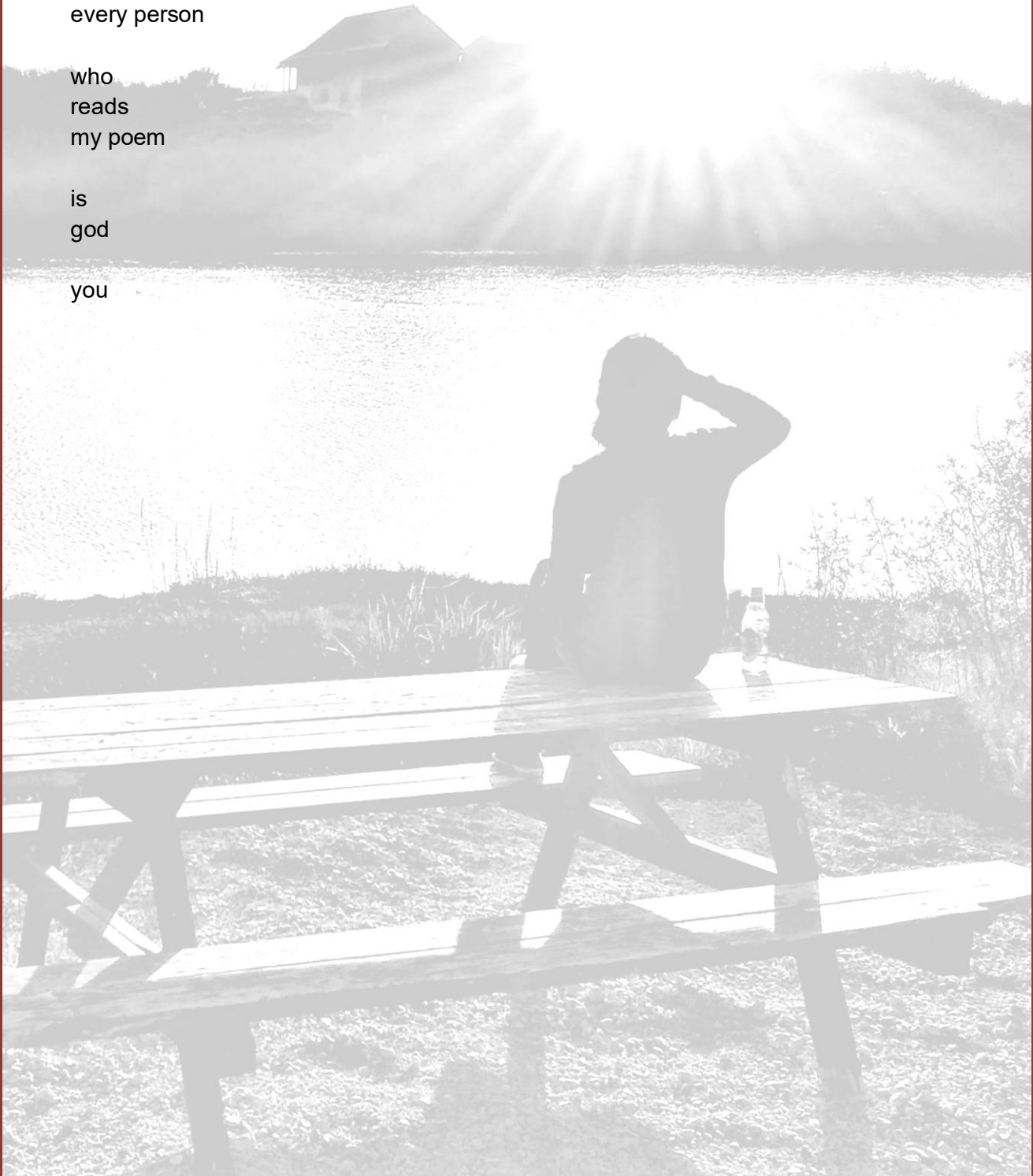
20230728.5 | connected

every person

who  
reads  
my poem

is  
god

you



20230728.6 | one word



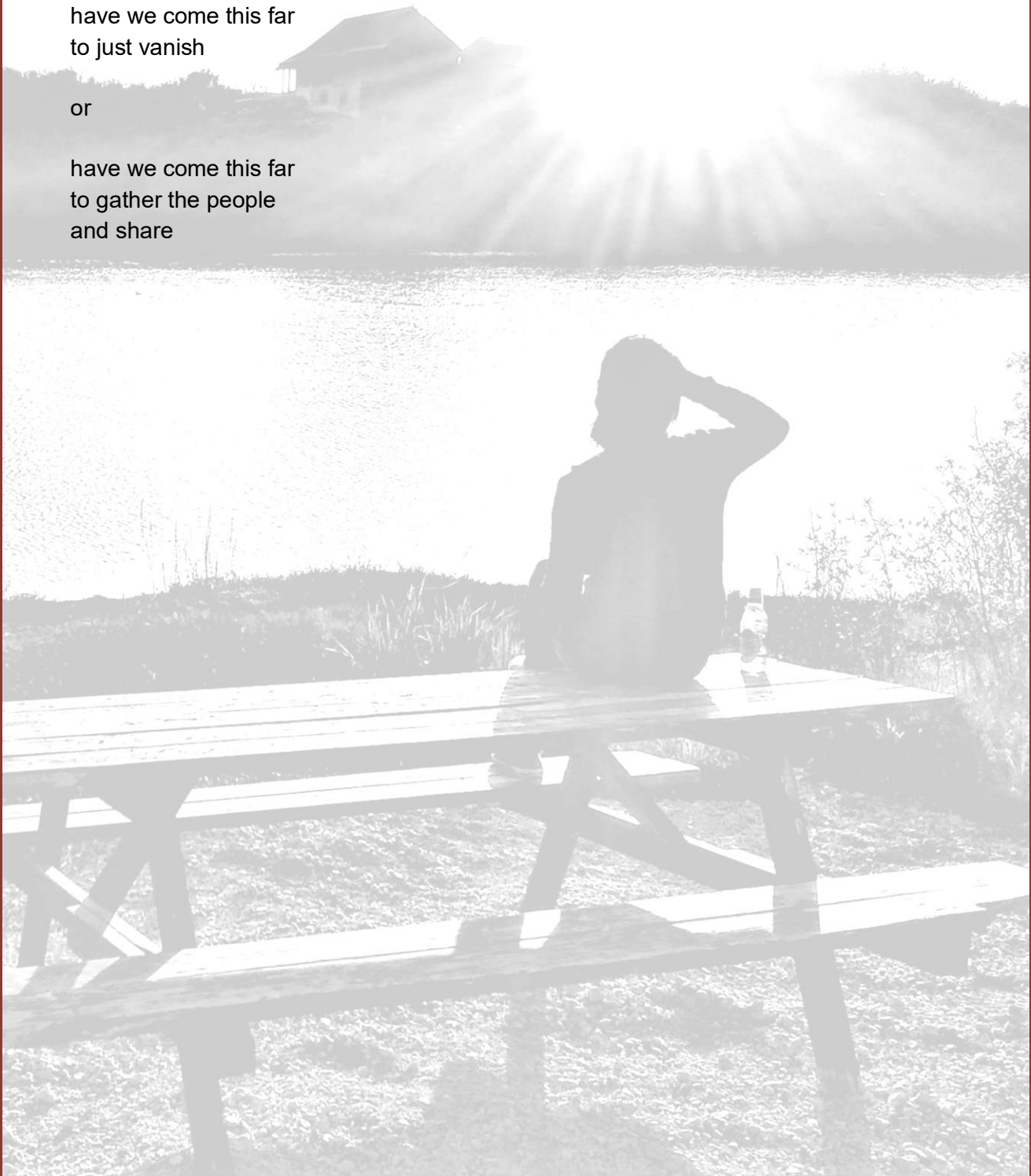


20230728.7 | or

have we come this far  
to just vanish

or

have we come this far  
to gather the people  
and share

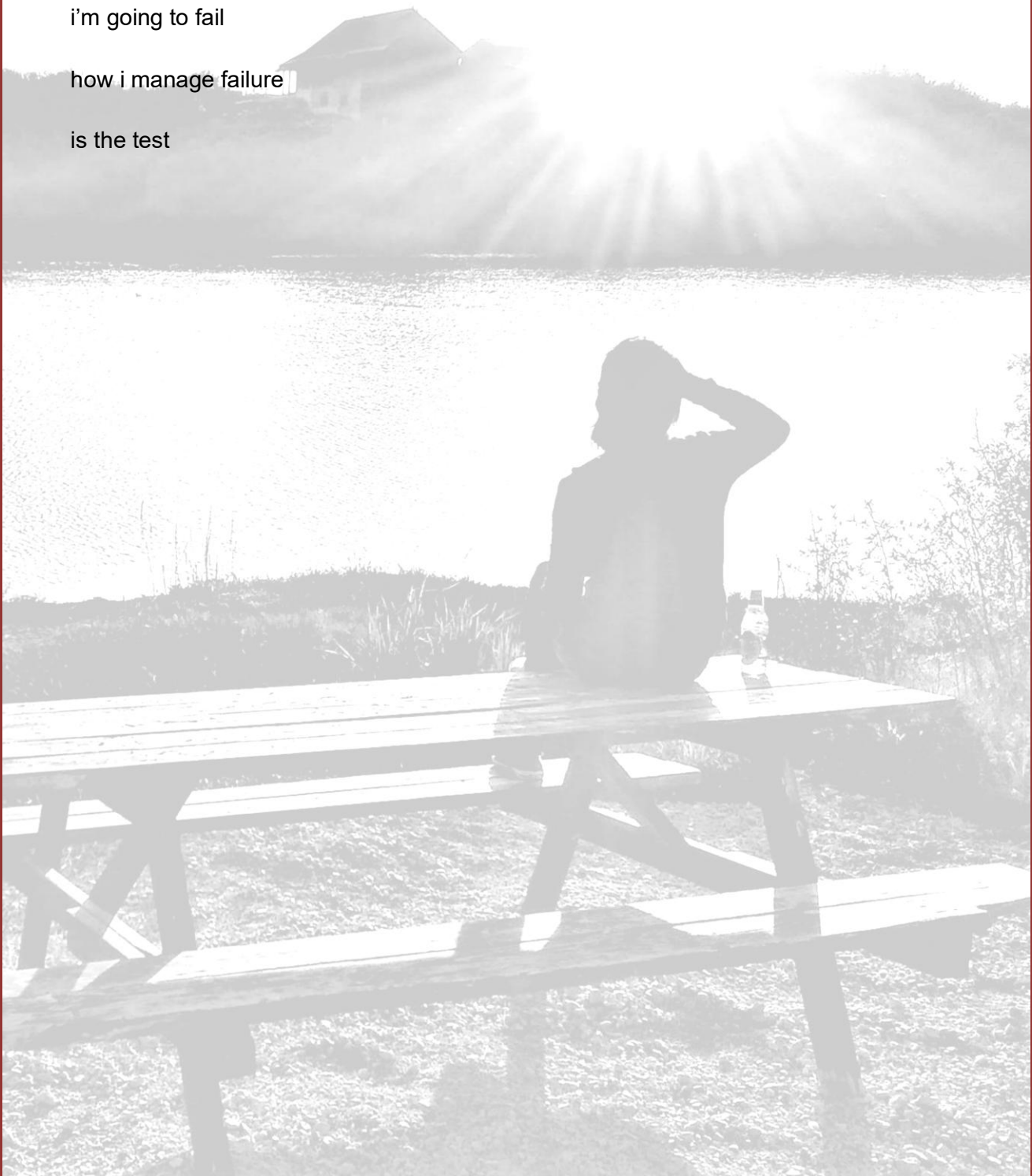


20230804.1 | the test

i'm going to fail

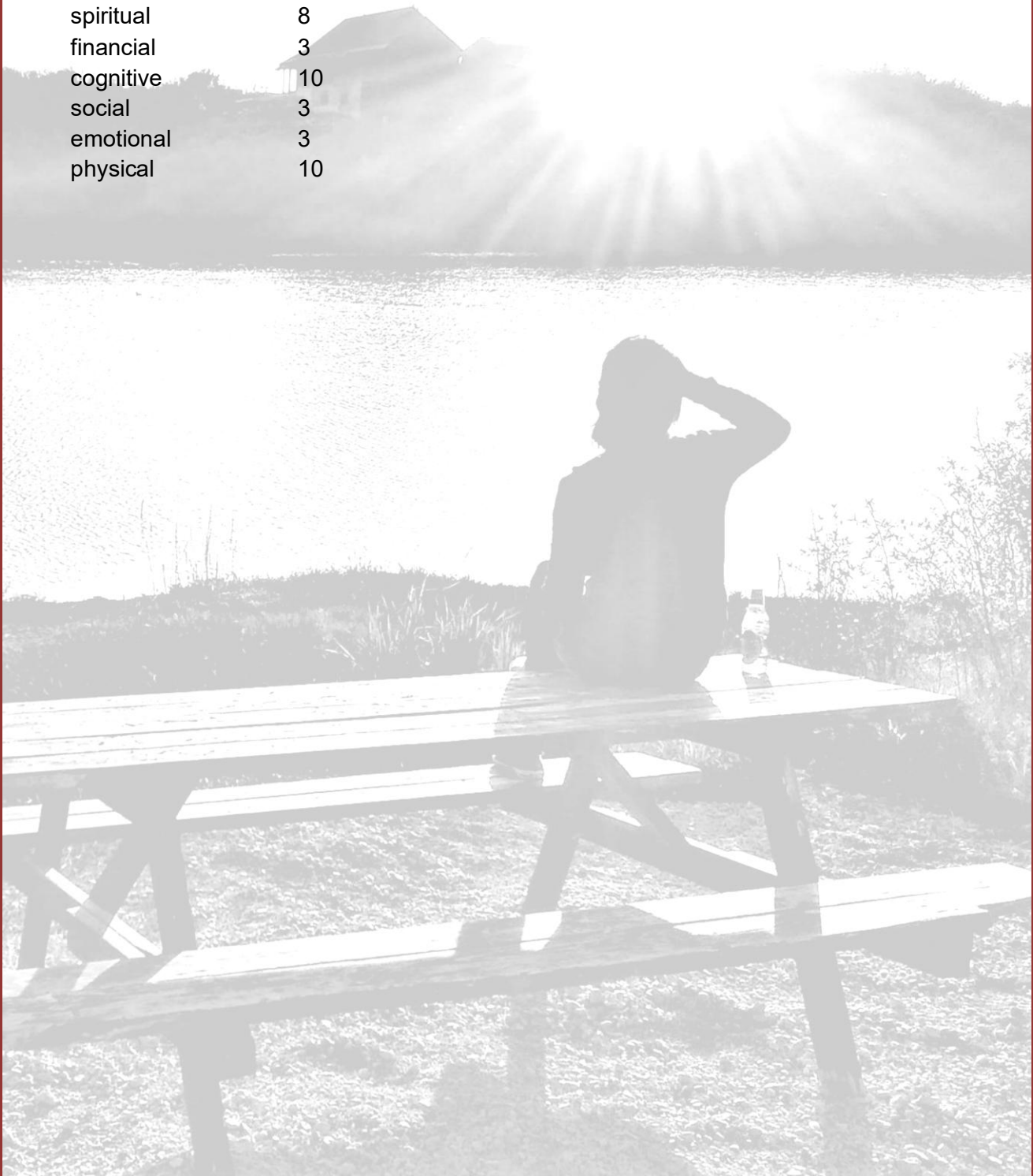
how i manage failure

is the test



20230804.2 | juggling

spiritual	8
financial	3
cognitive	10
social	3
emotional	3
physical	10





20230804.3 | held too long

a breath  
is life

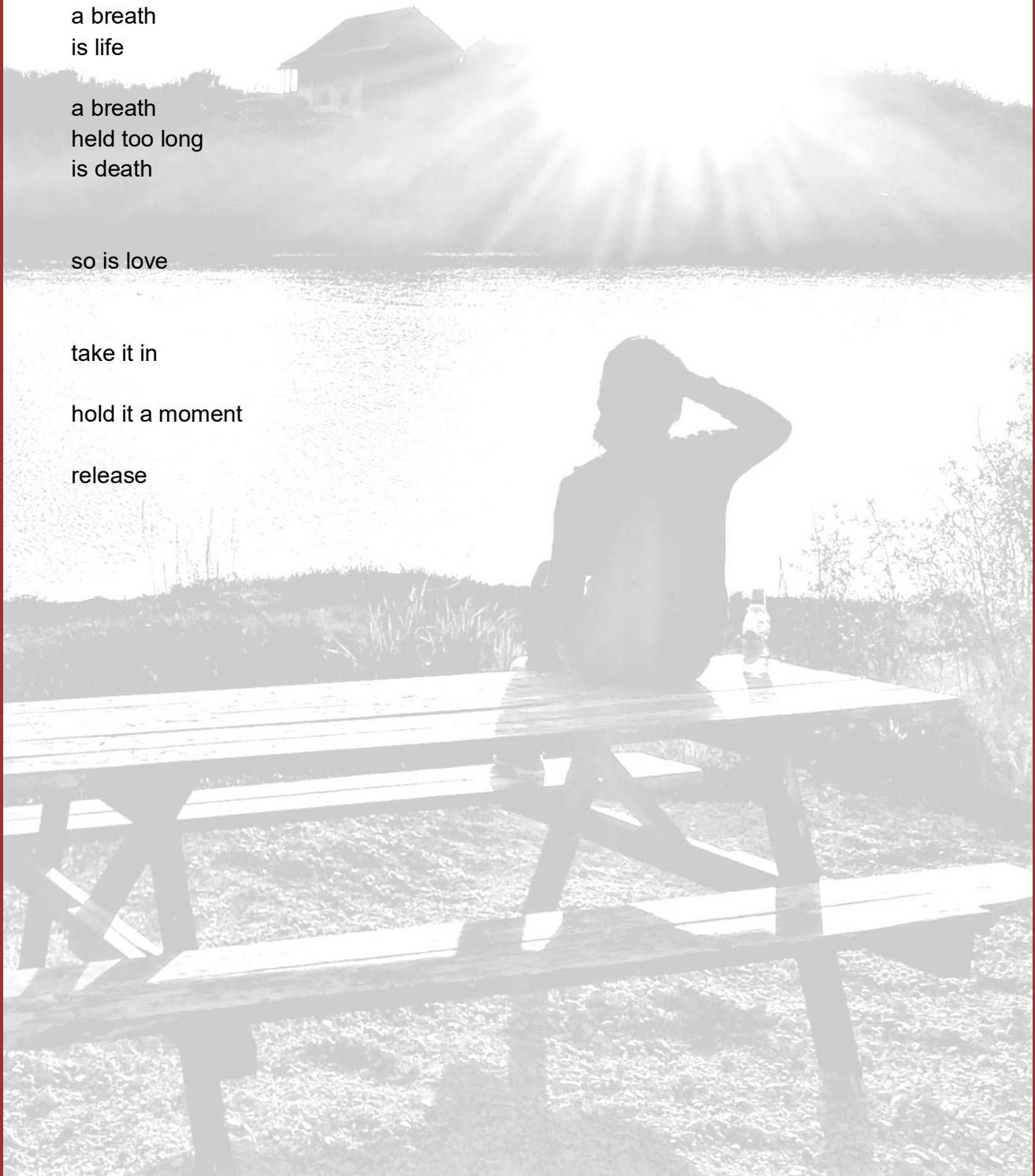
a breath  
held too long  
is death

so is love

take it in

hold it a moment

release



## 20230807.1 | journey's reward

i push my wheelbarrow  
through the fields of feminine flowers

i push my wheelbarrow  
to the edge of  
In the Mowing

i push my wheelbarrow  
to the road's end  
to the canyon's edge

i push my wheelbarrow  
to the tattered end  
of my usefulness

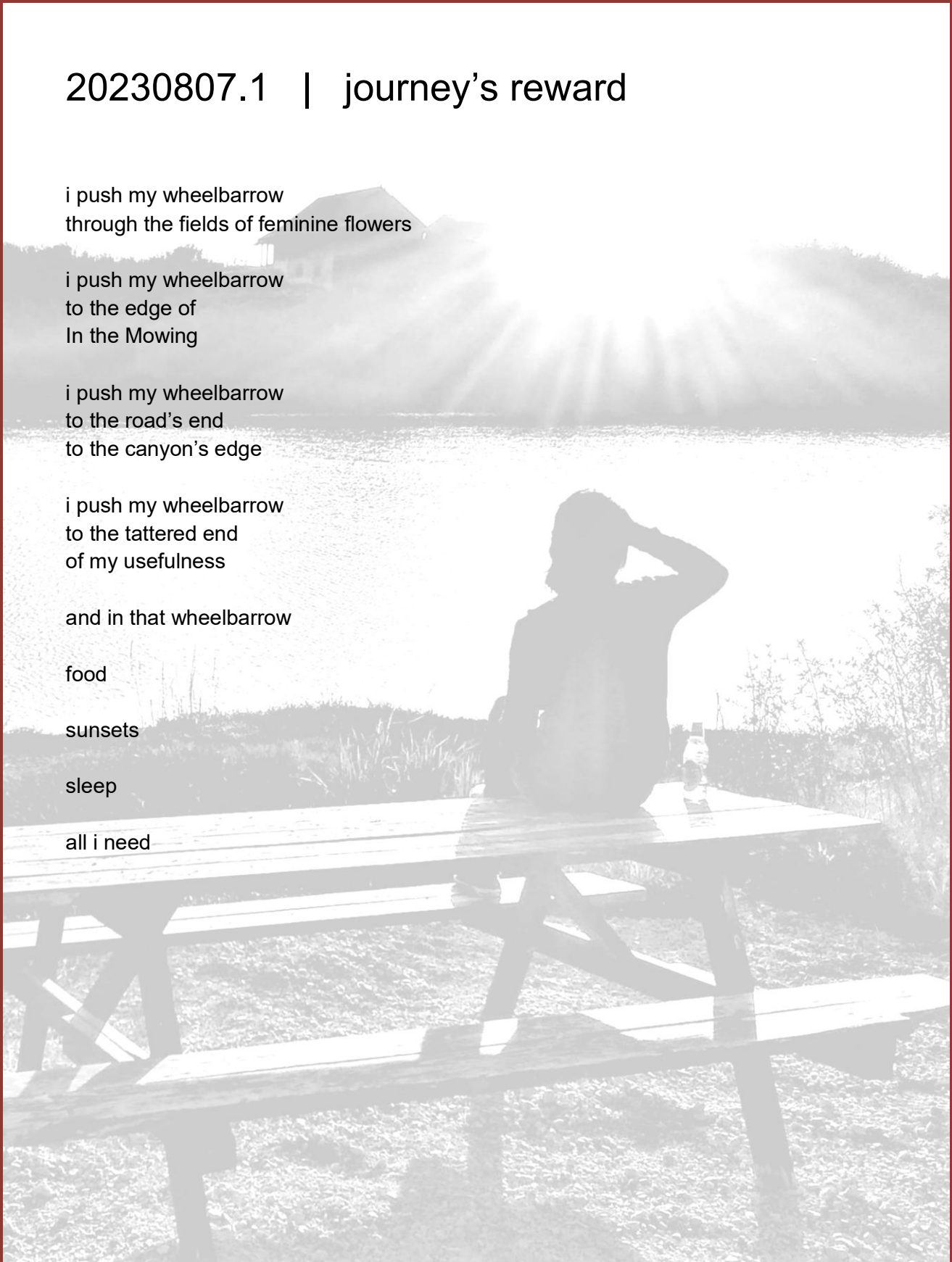
and in that wheelbarrow

food

sunsets

sleep

all i need

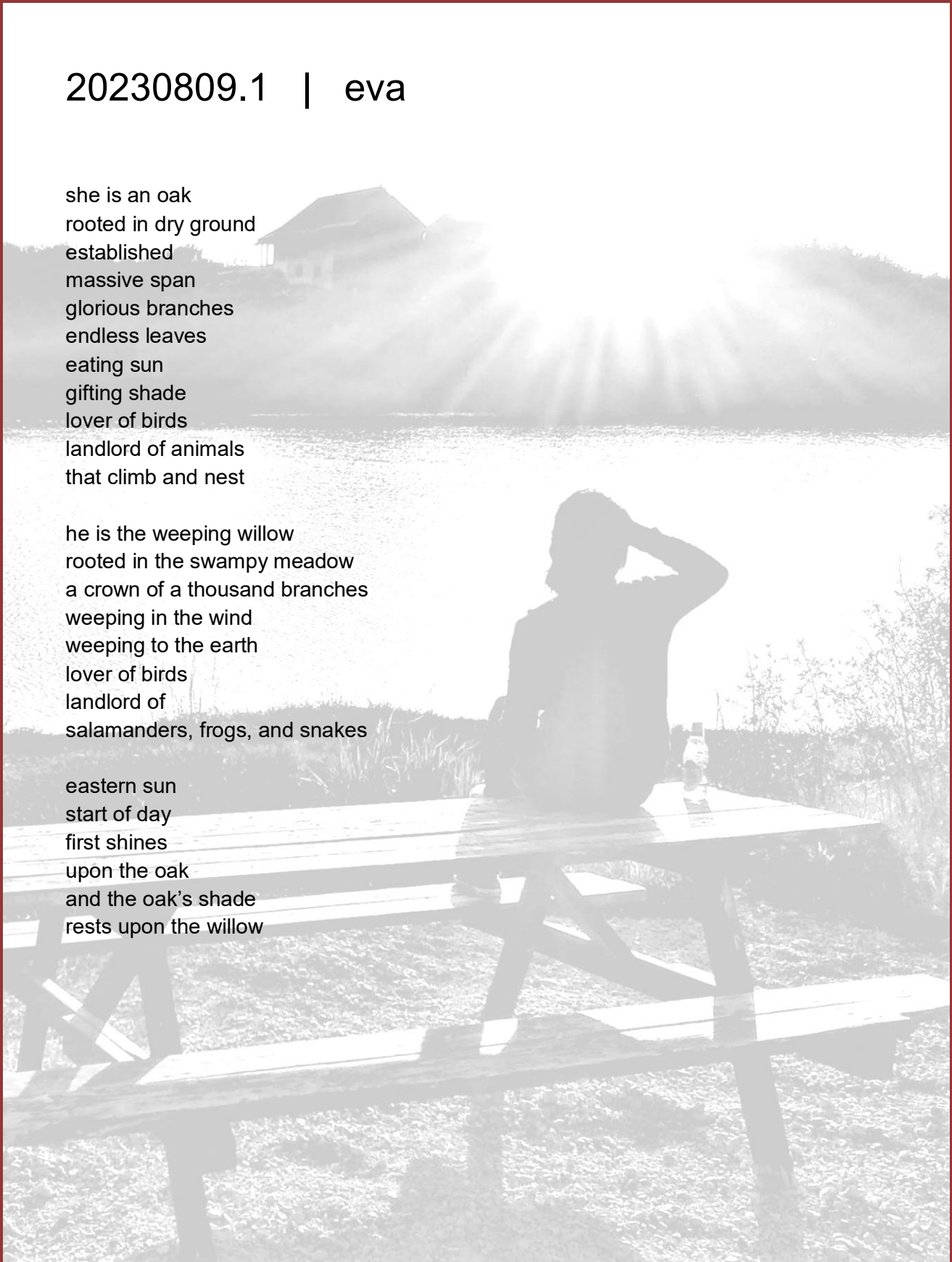


20230809.1 | eva

she is an oak  
rooted in dry ground  
established  
massive span  
glorious branches  
endless leaves  
eating sun  
gifting shade  
lover of birds  
landlord of animals  
that climb and nest

he is the weeping willow  
rooted in the swampy meadow  
a crown of a thousand branches  
weeping in the wind  
weeping to the earth  
lover of birds  
landlord of  
salamanders, frogs, and snakes

eastern sun  
start of day  
first shines  
upon the oak  
and the oak's shade  
rests upon the willow





noon they stand equal  
her crown  
his crown  
standing tall  
shadows beneath

western sun  
end of day  
now shines  
upon the willow  
and the willow's shade  
rests upon the oak

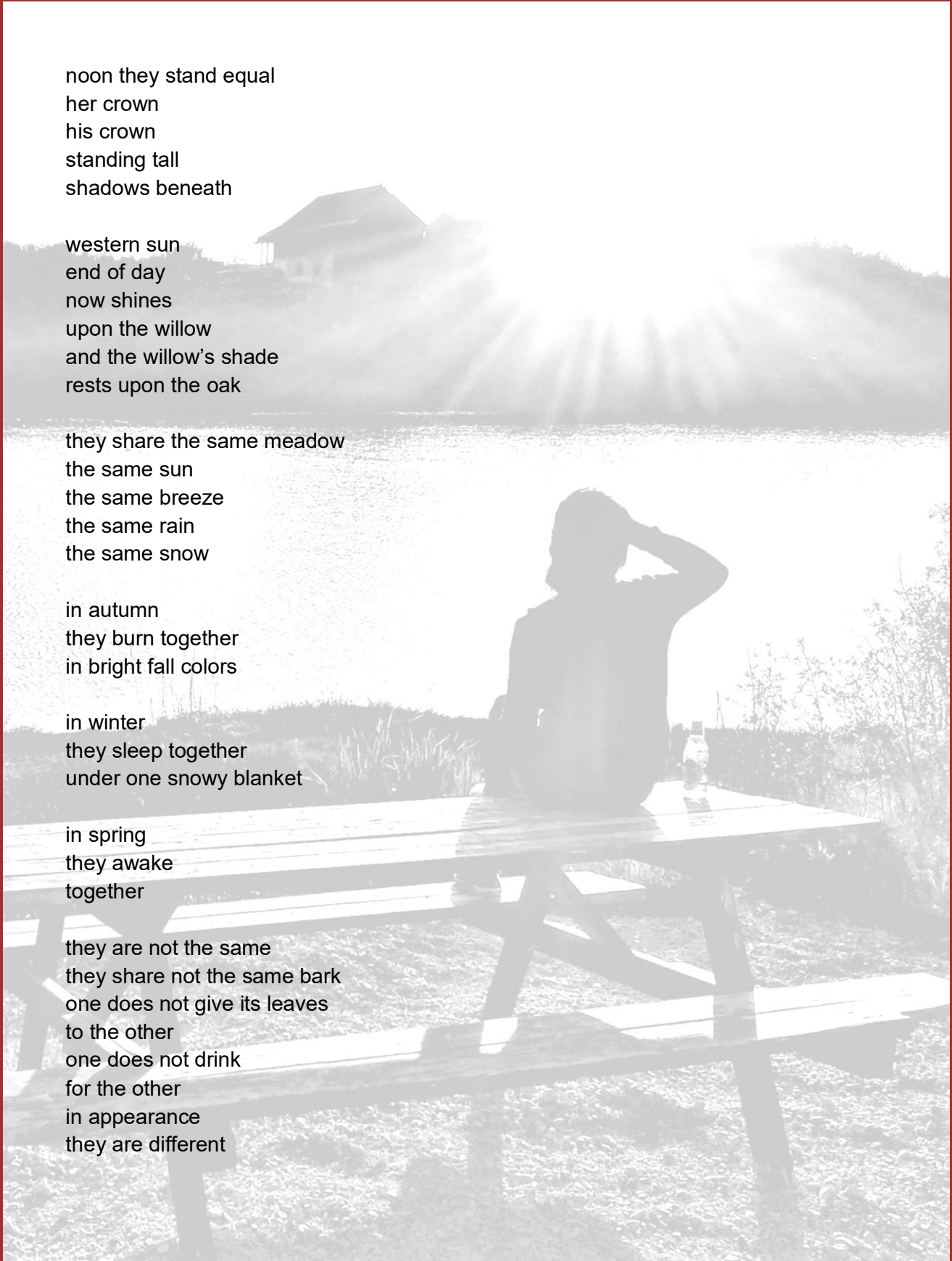
they share the same meadow  
the same sun  
the same breeze  
the same rain  
the same snow

in autumn  
they burn together  
in bright fall colors

in winter  
they sleep together  
under one snowy blanket

in spring  
they awake  
together

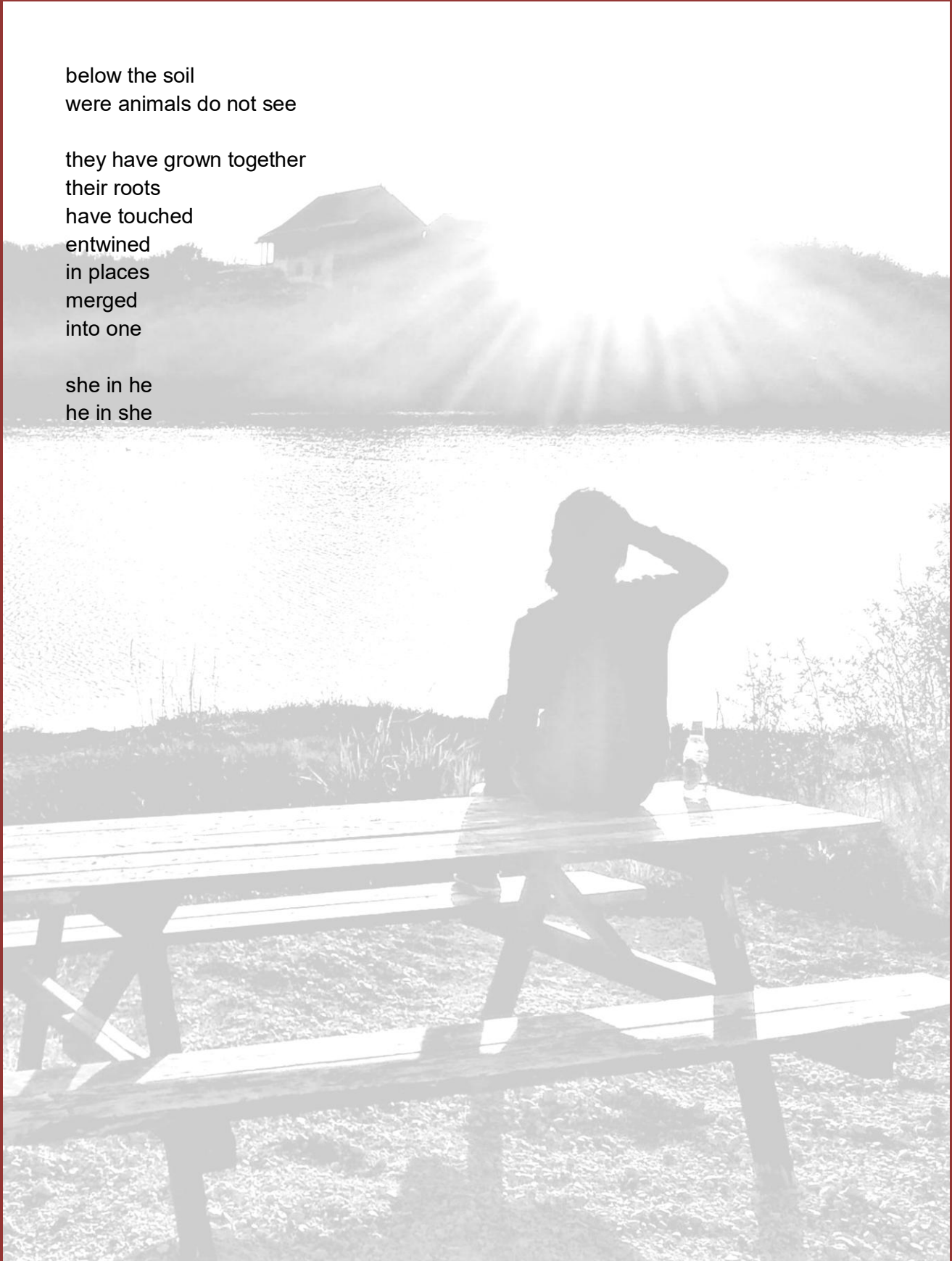
they are not the same  
they share not the same bark  
one does not give its leaves  
to the other  
one does not drink  
for the other  
in appearance  
they are different



below the soil  
were animals do not see

they have grown together  
their roots  
have touched  
entwined  
in places  
merged  
into one

she in he  
he in she



## 20230809.2 | wise people

single people go through life looking for  
their person

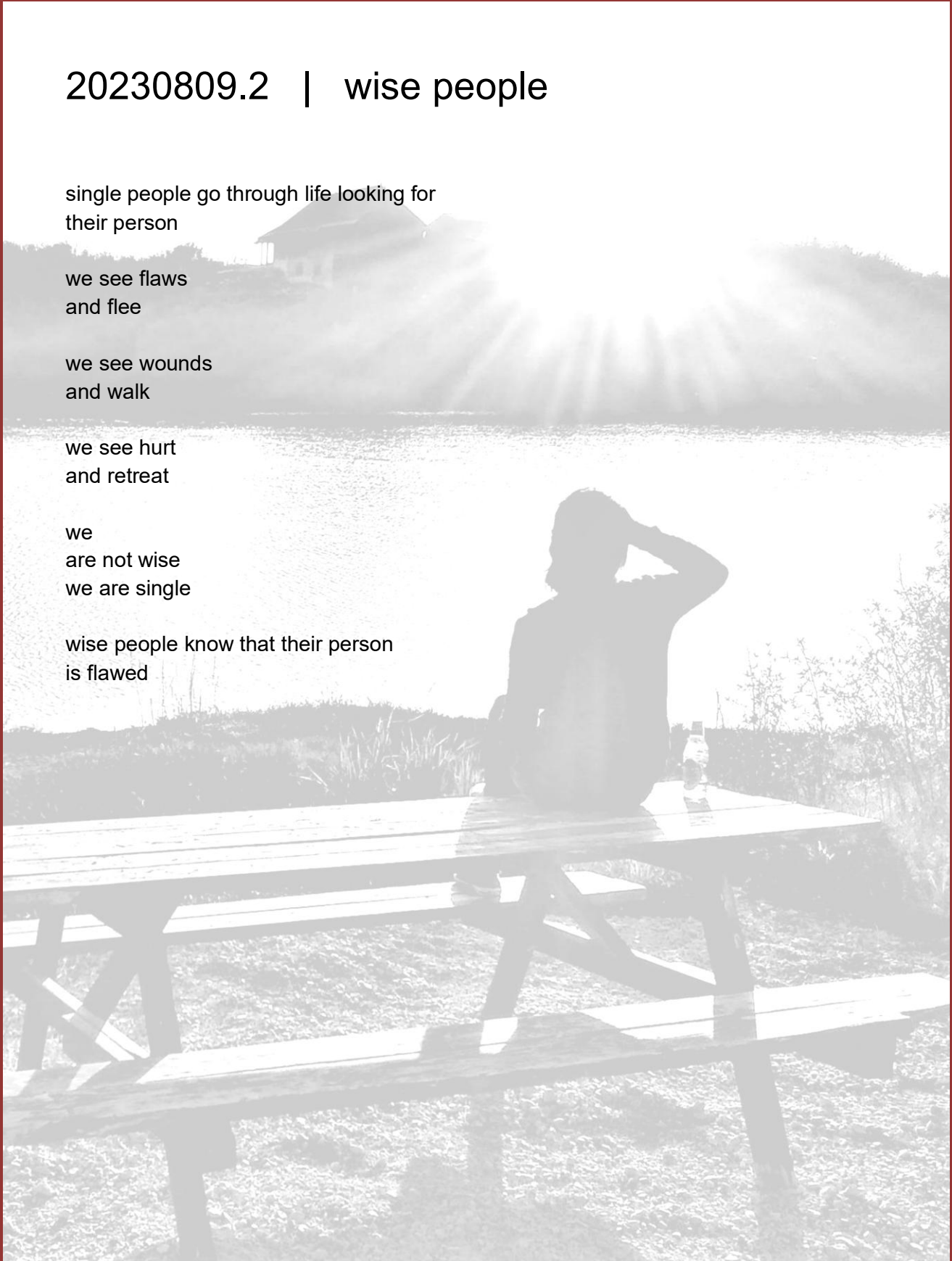
we see flaws  
and flee

we see wounds  
and walk

we see hurt  
and retreat

we  
are not wise  
we are single

wise people know that their person  
is flawed



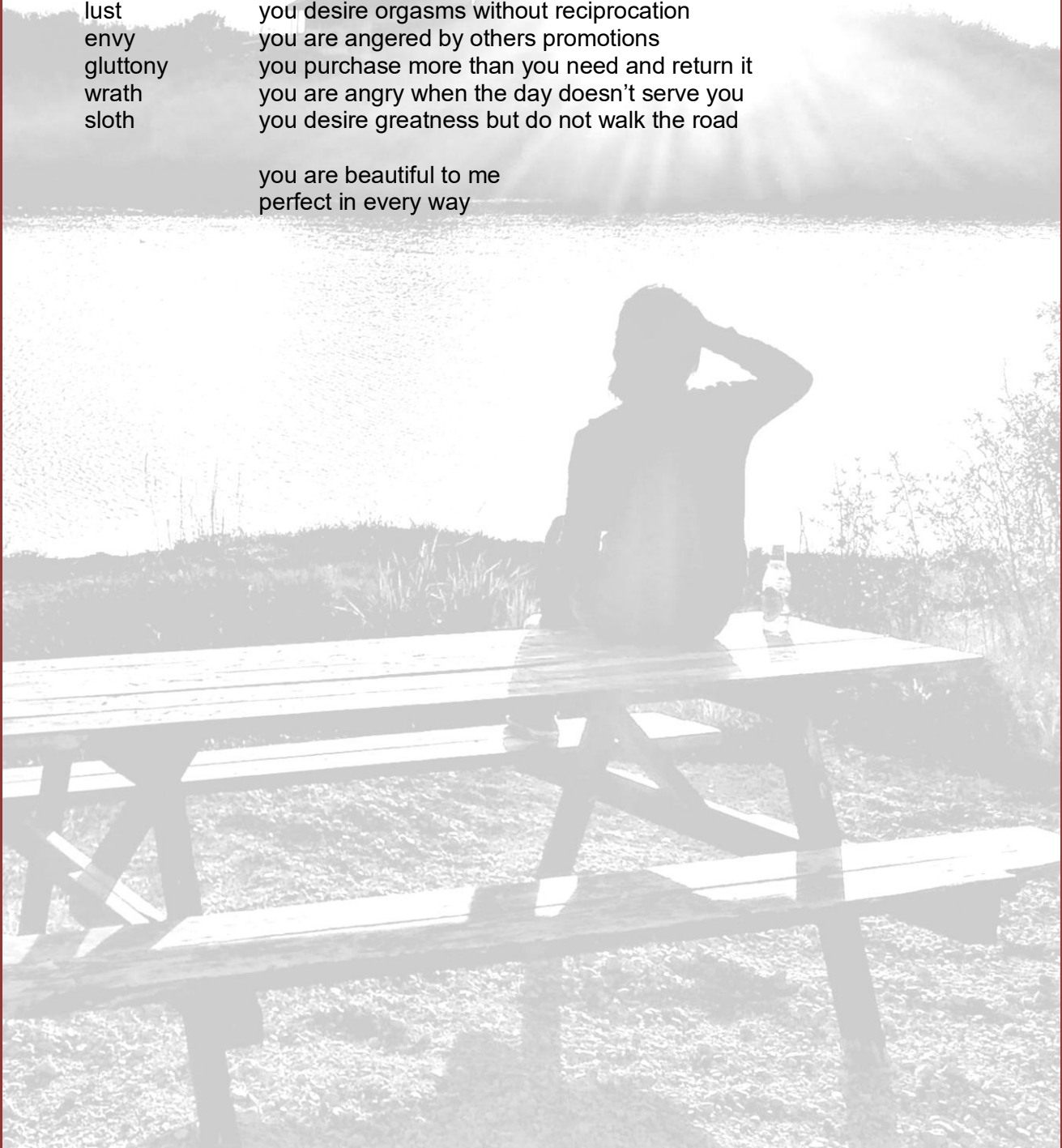


## 20230809.3 | seven exceptions

pride  
greed  
lust  
envy  
gluttony  
wrath  
sloth

you feel you should be in charge  
you hoard dollars in your drawers  
you desire orgasms without reciprocation  
you are angered by others promotions  
you purchase more than you need and return it  
you are angry when the day doesn't serve you  
you desire greatness but do not walk the road

you are beautiful to me  
perfect in every way



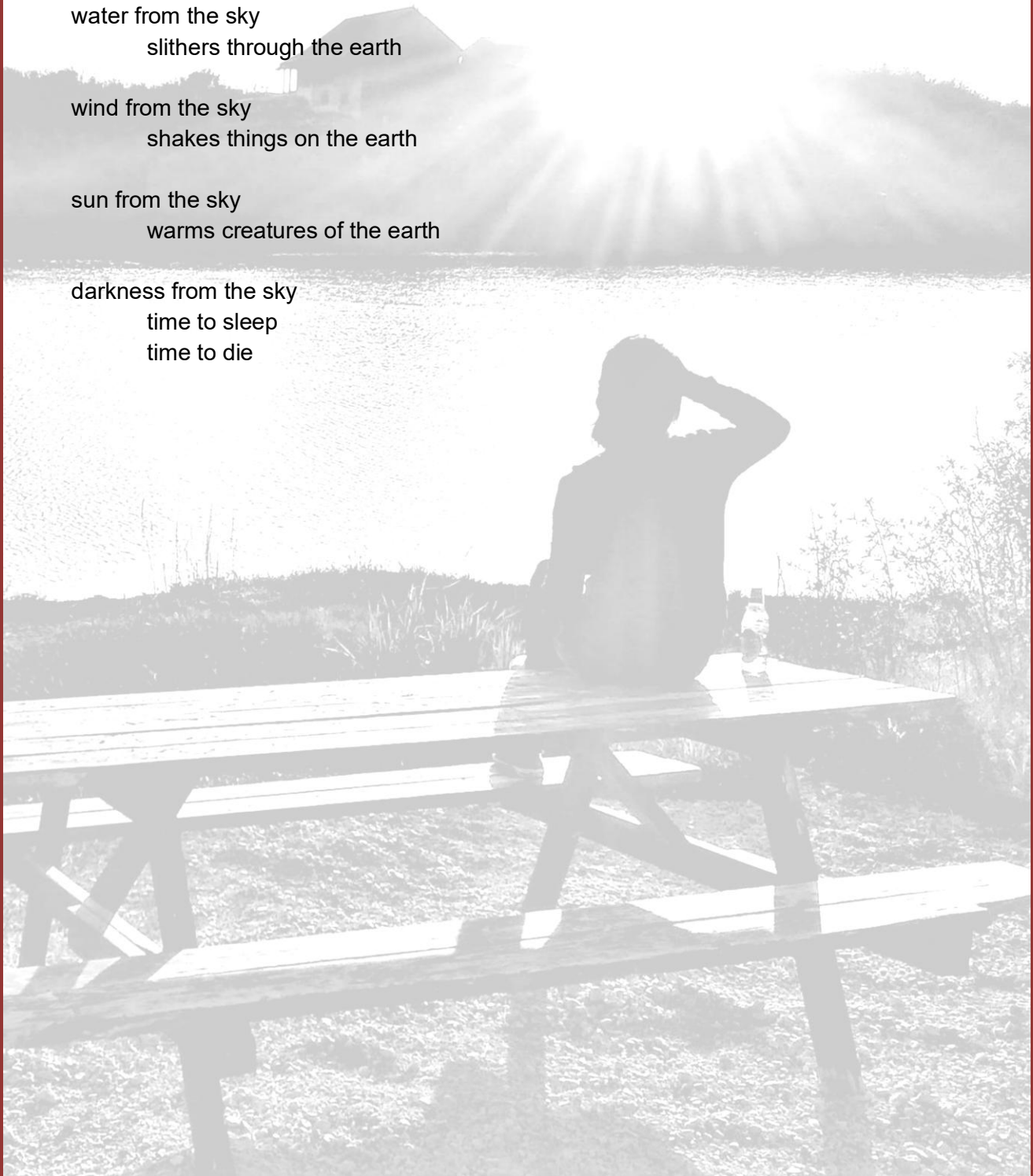
20230809.4 | heaven sent

water from the sky  
slithers through the earth

wind from the sky  
shakes things on the earth

sun from the sky  
warms creatures of the earth

darkness from the sky  
time to sleep  
time to die



## 20230810.1 | unwanted waters

the pain is less

therefore

i have less to say

less to write

less to feel

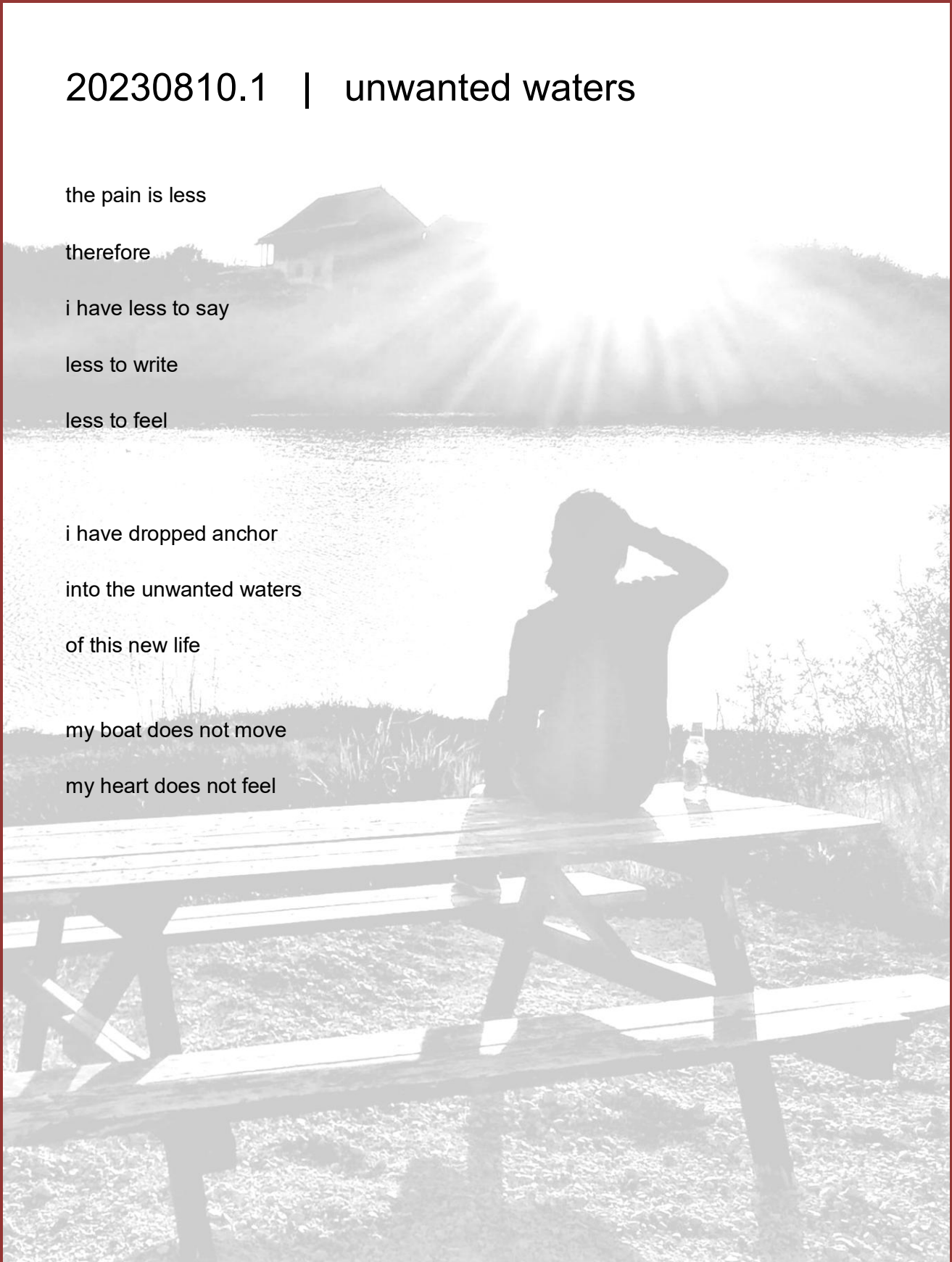
i have dropped anchor

into the unwanted waters

of this new life

my boat does not move

my heart does not feel





20230810.2 | or a solo

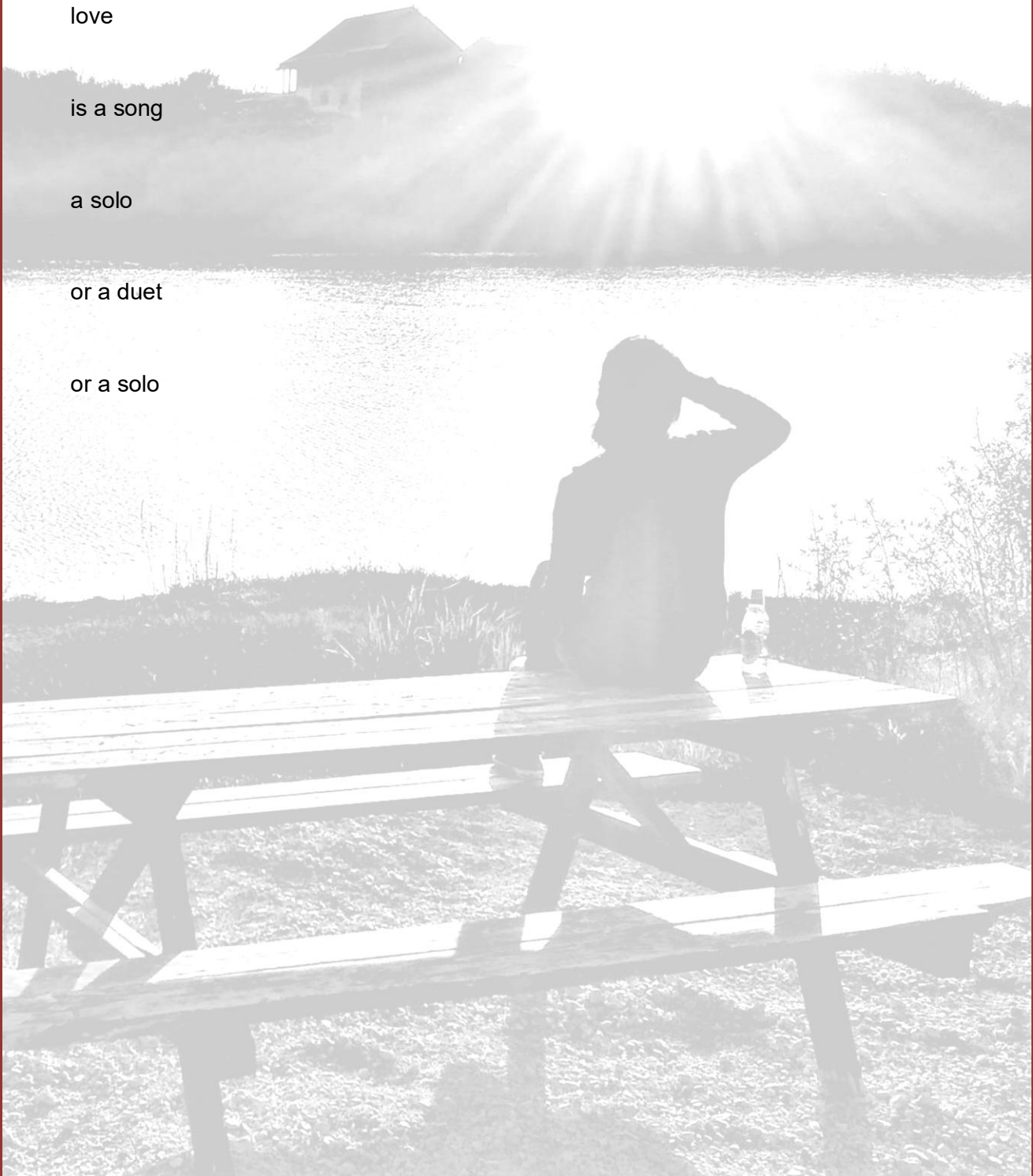
love

is a song

a solo

or a duet

or a solo



## 20230810.3 | as you please

collette

was the spanish-american war

lisa

world war i

michelle

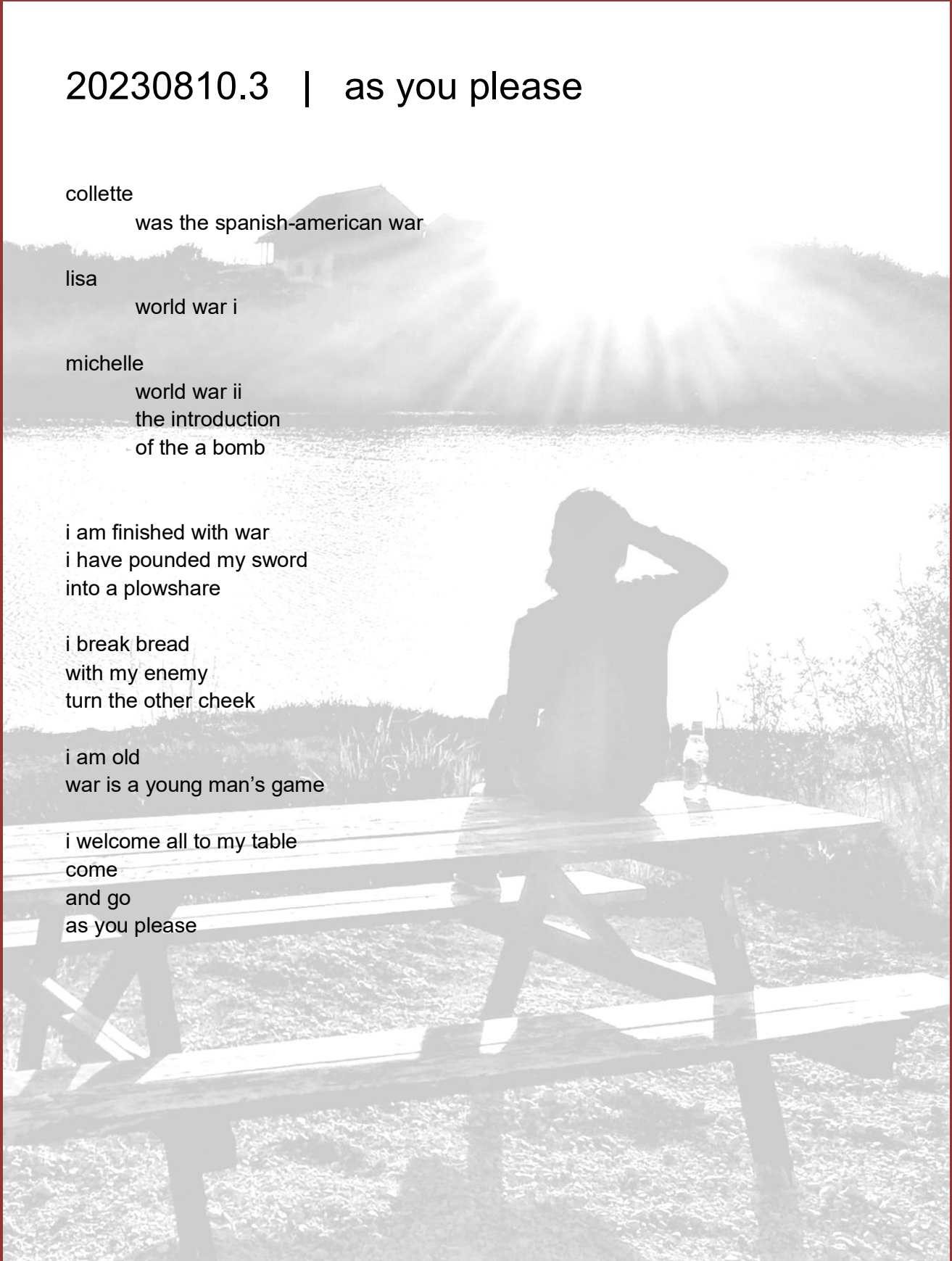
world war ii  
the introduction  
of the a bomb

i am finished with war  
i have pounded my sword  
into a plowshare

i break bread  
with my enemy  
turn the other cheek

i am old  
war is a young man's game

i welcome all to my table  
come  
and go  
as you please



## 20230815.1 | the unlived story

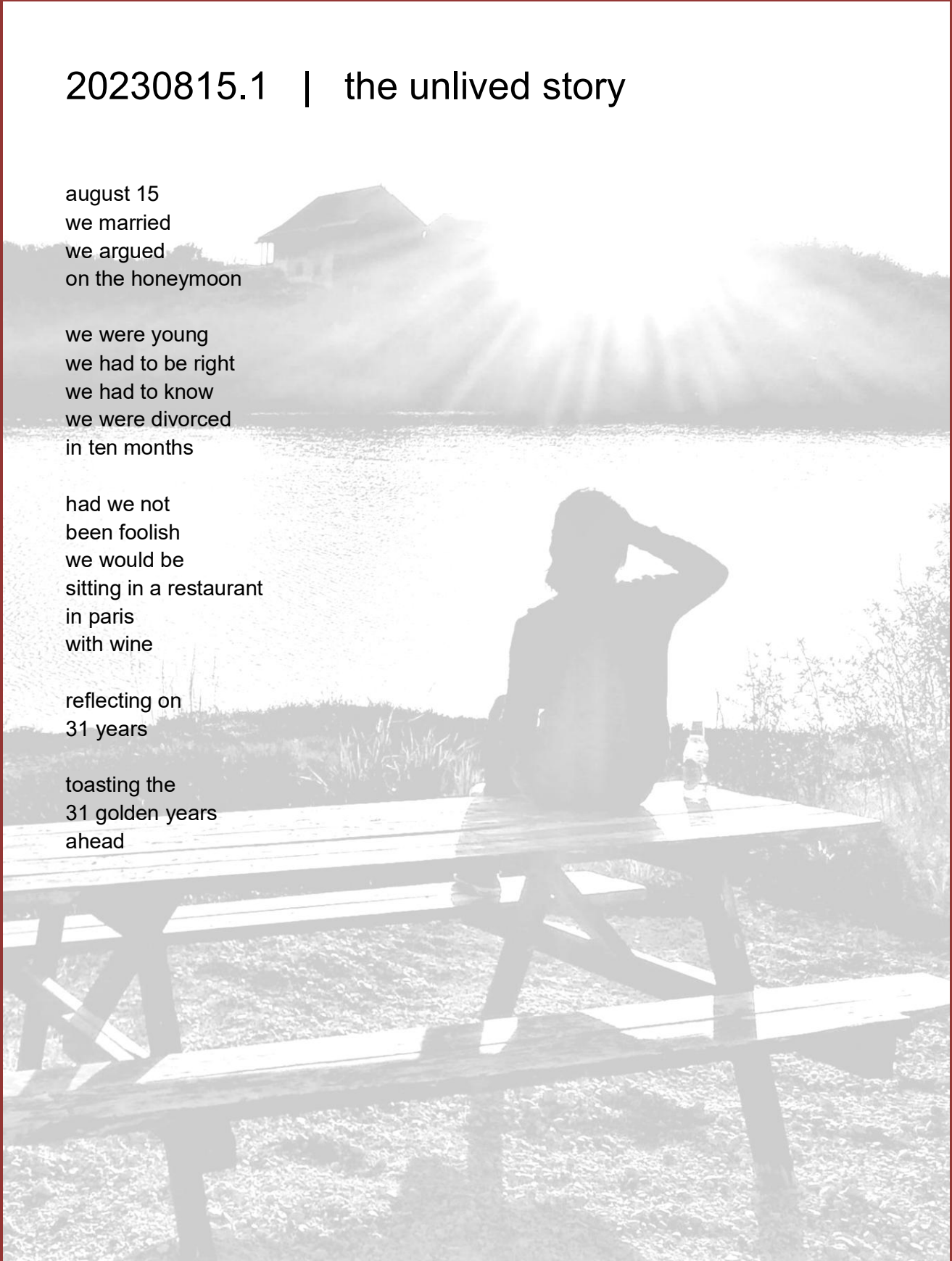
august 15  
we married  
we argued  
on the honeymoon

we were young  
we had to be right  
we had to know  
we were divorced  
in ten months

had we not  
been foolish  
we would be  
sitting in a restaurant  
in paris  
with wine

reflecting on  
31 years

toasting the  
31 golden years  
ahead





20230815.2 | time

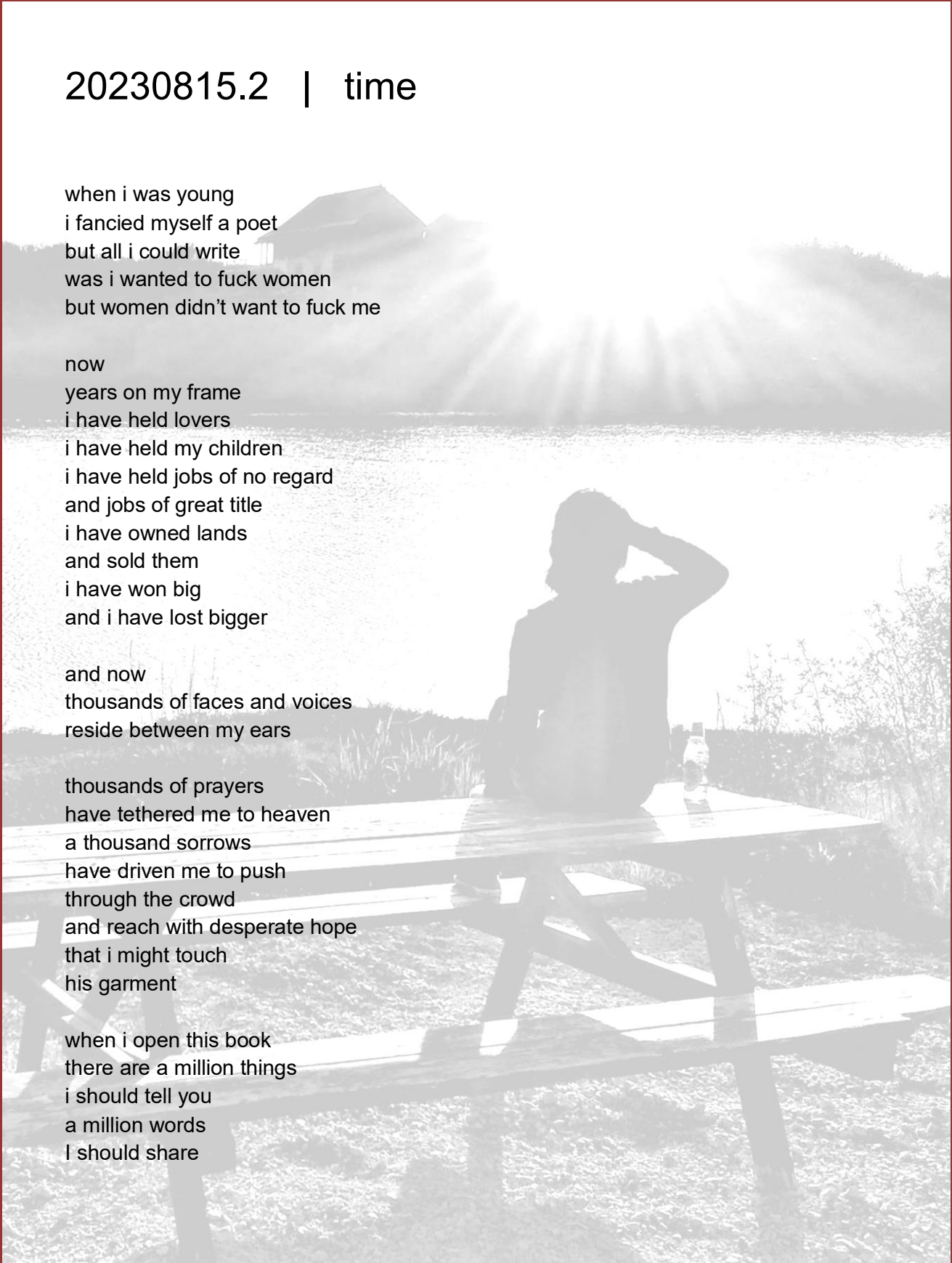
when i was young  
i fancied myself a poet  
but all i could write  
was i wanted to fuck women  
but women didn't want to fuck me

now  
years on my frame  
i have held lovers  
i have held my children  
i have held jobs of no regard  
and jobs of great title  
i have owned lands  
and sold them  
i have won big  
and i have lost bigger

and now  
thousands of faces and voices  
reside between my ears

thousands of prayers  
have tethered me to heaven  
a thousand sorrows  
have driven me to push  
through the crowd  
and reach with desperate hope  
that i might touch  
his garment

when i open this book  
there are a million things  
i should tell you  
a million words  
i should share



20230817.1 | stardust

i am clay  
walking on clay

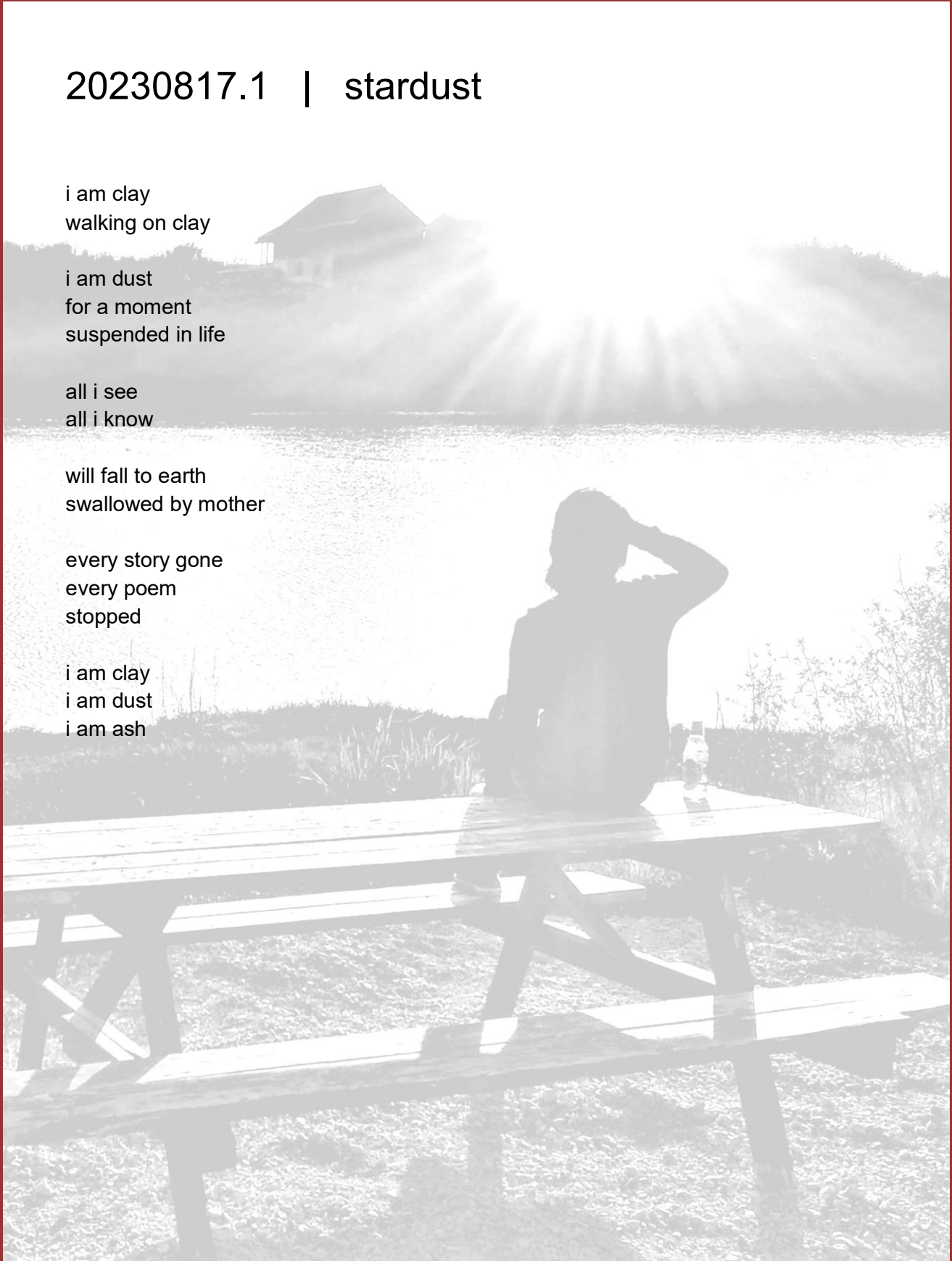
i am dust  
for a moment  
suspended in life

all i see  
all i know

will fall to earth  
swallowed by mother

every story gone  
every poem  
stopped

i am clay  
i am dust  
i am ash



## 20230818.1 | love times four

every breath i take  
are four more breaths  
every heartbeat  
add four more

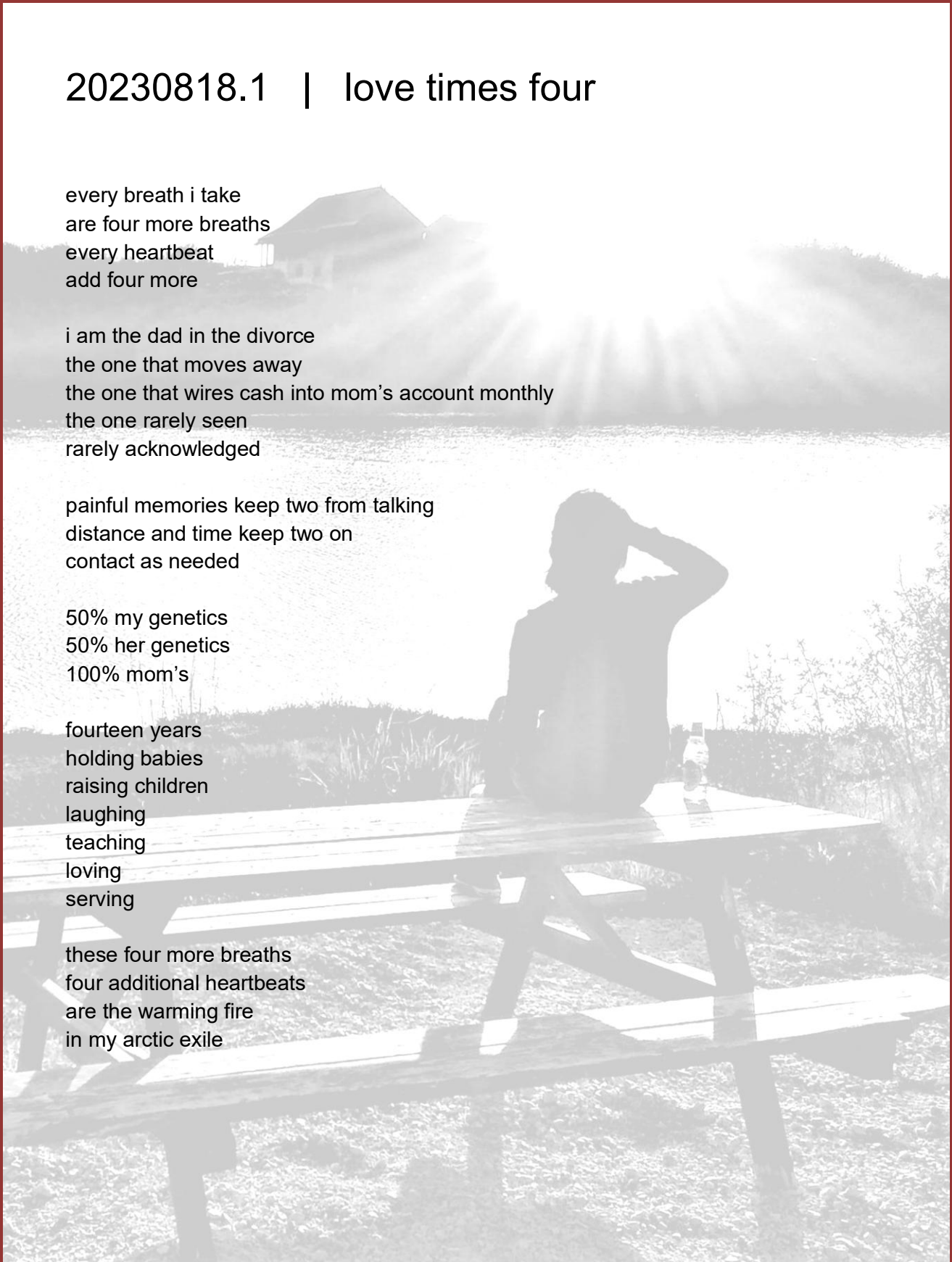
i am the dad in the divorce  
the one that moves away  
the one that wires cash into mom's account monthly  
the one rarely seen  
rarely acknowledged

painful memories keep two from talking  
distance and time keep two on  
contact as needed

50% my genetics  
50% her genetics  
100% mom's

fourteen years  
holding babies  
raising children  
laughing  
teaching  
loving  
serving

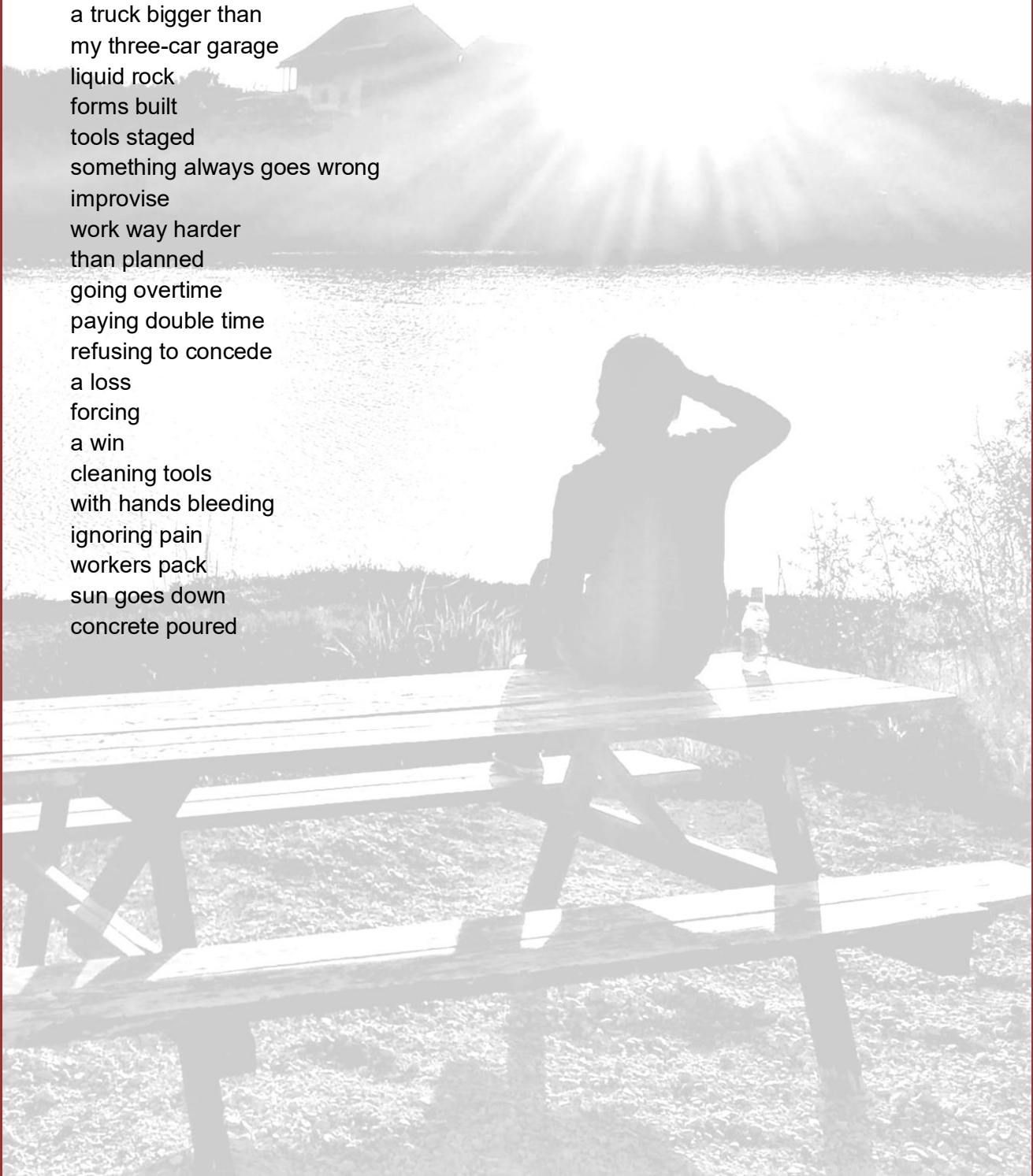
these four more breaths  
four additional heartbeats  
are the warming fire  
in my arctic exile





## 20230831.1 | concrete poured

a truck bigger than  
my three-car garage  
liquid rock  
forms built  
tools staged  
something always goes wrong  
improvise  
work way harder  
than planned  
going overtime  
paying double time  
refusing to concede  
a loss  
forcing  
a win  
cleaning tools  
with hands bleeding  
ignoring pain  
workers pack  
sun goes down  
concrete poured



## 20230905.1 | promises not kept

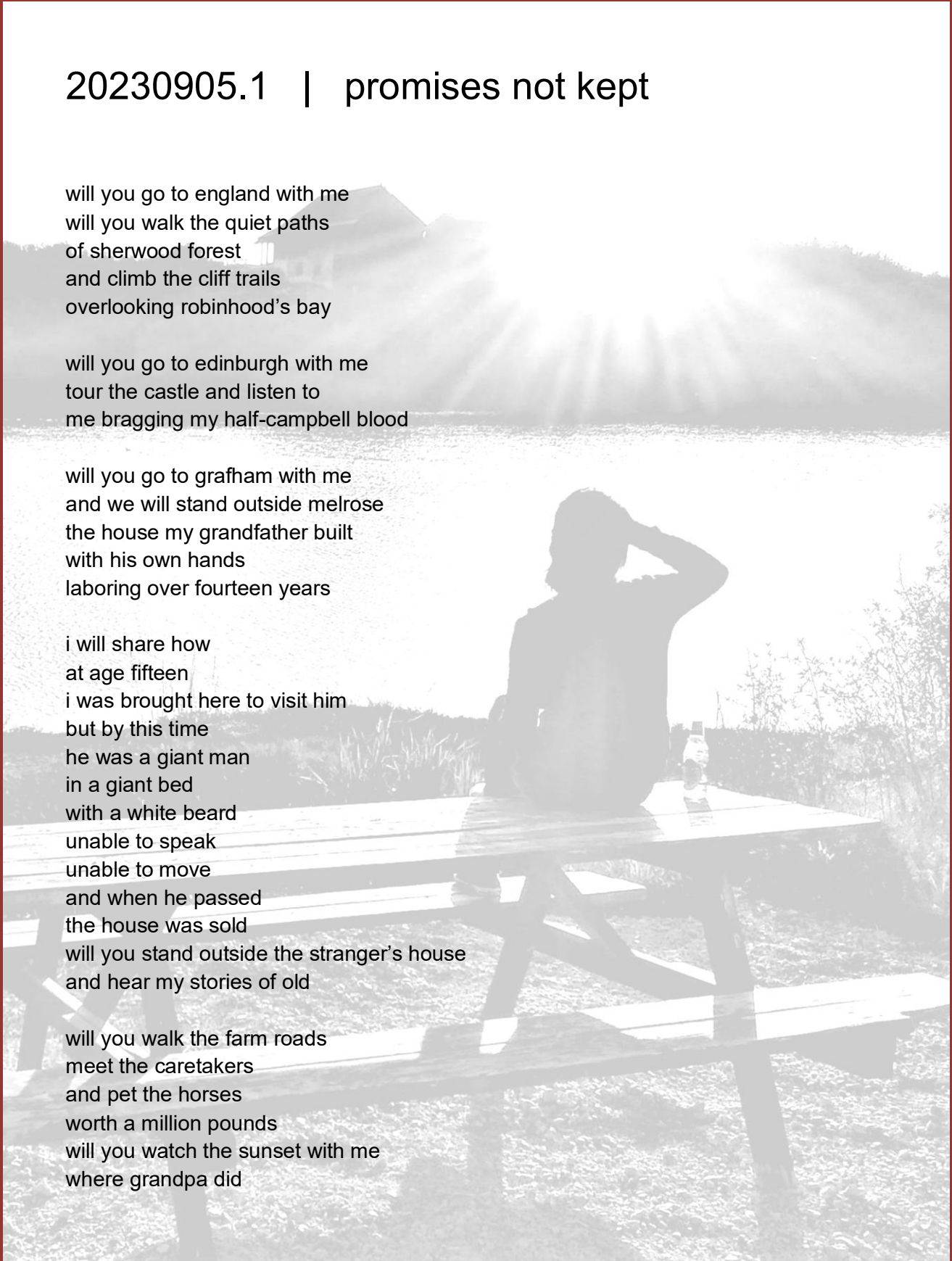
will you go to england with me  
will you walk the quiet paths  
of sherwood forest  
and climb the cliff trails  
overlooking robinhood's bay

will you go to edinburgh with me  
tour the castle and listen to  
me bragging my half-campbell blood

will you go to grafham with me  
and we will stand outside melrose  
the house my grandfather built  
with his own hands  
laboring over fourteen years

i will share how  
at age fifteen  
i was brought here to visit him  
but by this time  
he was a giant man  
in a giant bed  
with a white beard  
unable to speak  
unable to move  
and when he passed  
the house was sold  
will you stand outside the stranger's house  
and hear my stories of old

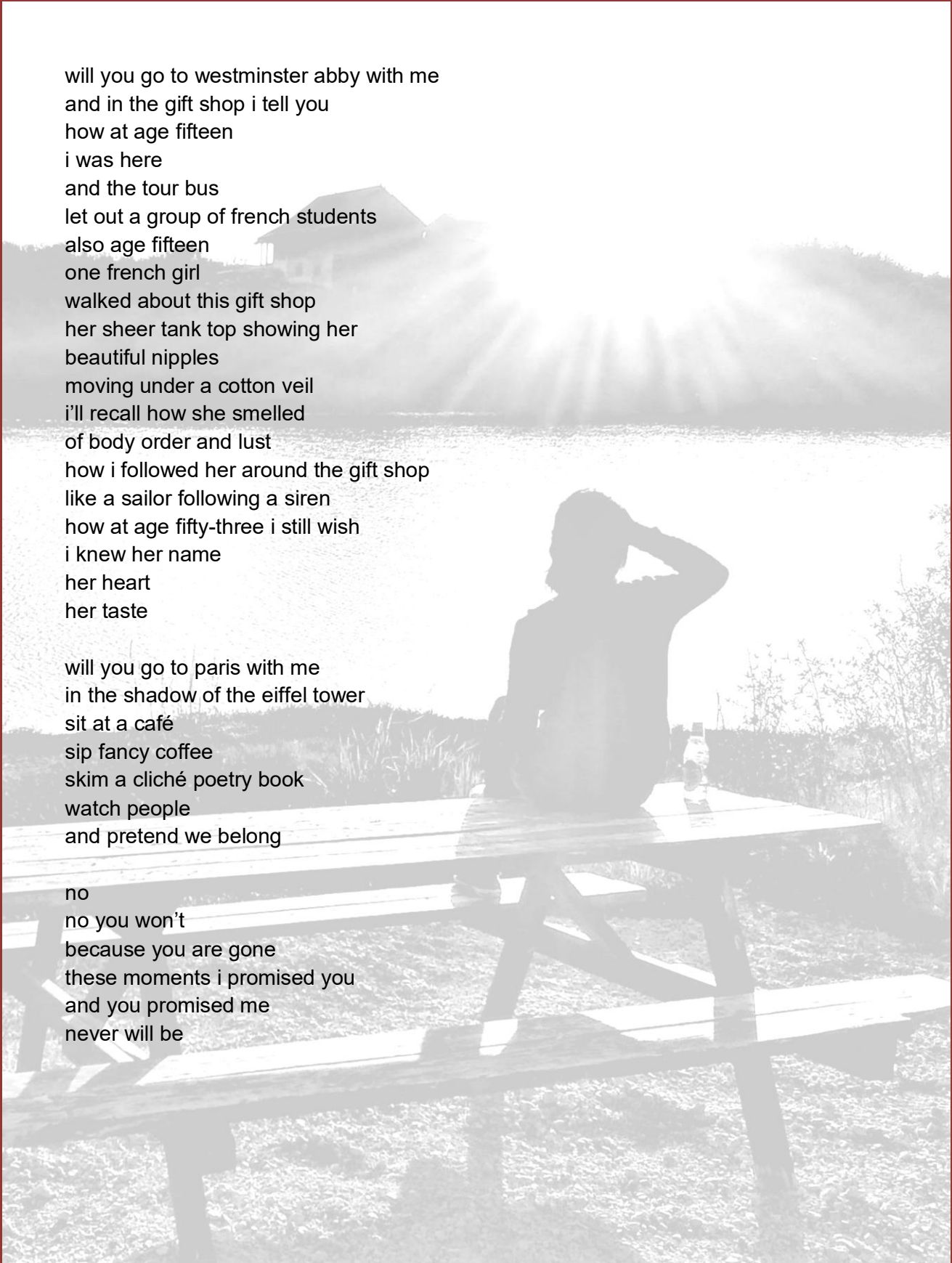
will you walk the farm roads  
meet the caretakers  
and pet the horses  
worth a million pounds  
will you watch the sunset with me  
where grandpa did



will you go to westminster abby with me  
and in the gift shop i tell you  
how at age fifteen  
i was here  
and the tour bus  
let out a group of french students  
also age fifteen  
one french girl  
walked about this gift shop  
her sheer tank top showing her  
beautiful nipples  
moving under a cotton veil  
i'll recall how she smelled  
of body order and lust  
how i followed her around the gift shop  
like a sailor following a siren  
how at age fifty-three i still wish  
i knew her name  
her heart  
her taste

will you go to paris with me  
in the shadow of the eiffel tower  
sit at a café  
sip fancy coffee  
skim a cliché poetry book  
watch people  
and pretend we belong

no  
no you won't  
because you are gone  
these moments i promised you  
and you promised me  
never will be





## 20230910.1 | the journey ends alone

i have come a long way  
to stand in a field  
with no one in sight

two lovers  
collapsed in each other's arms  
sweat cooling heated bodies  
flesh to flesh  
breath to breath  
kiss to kiss

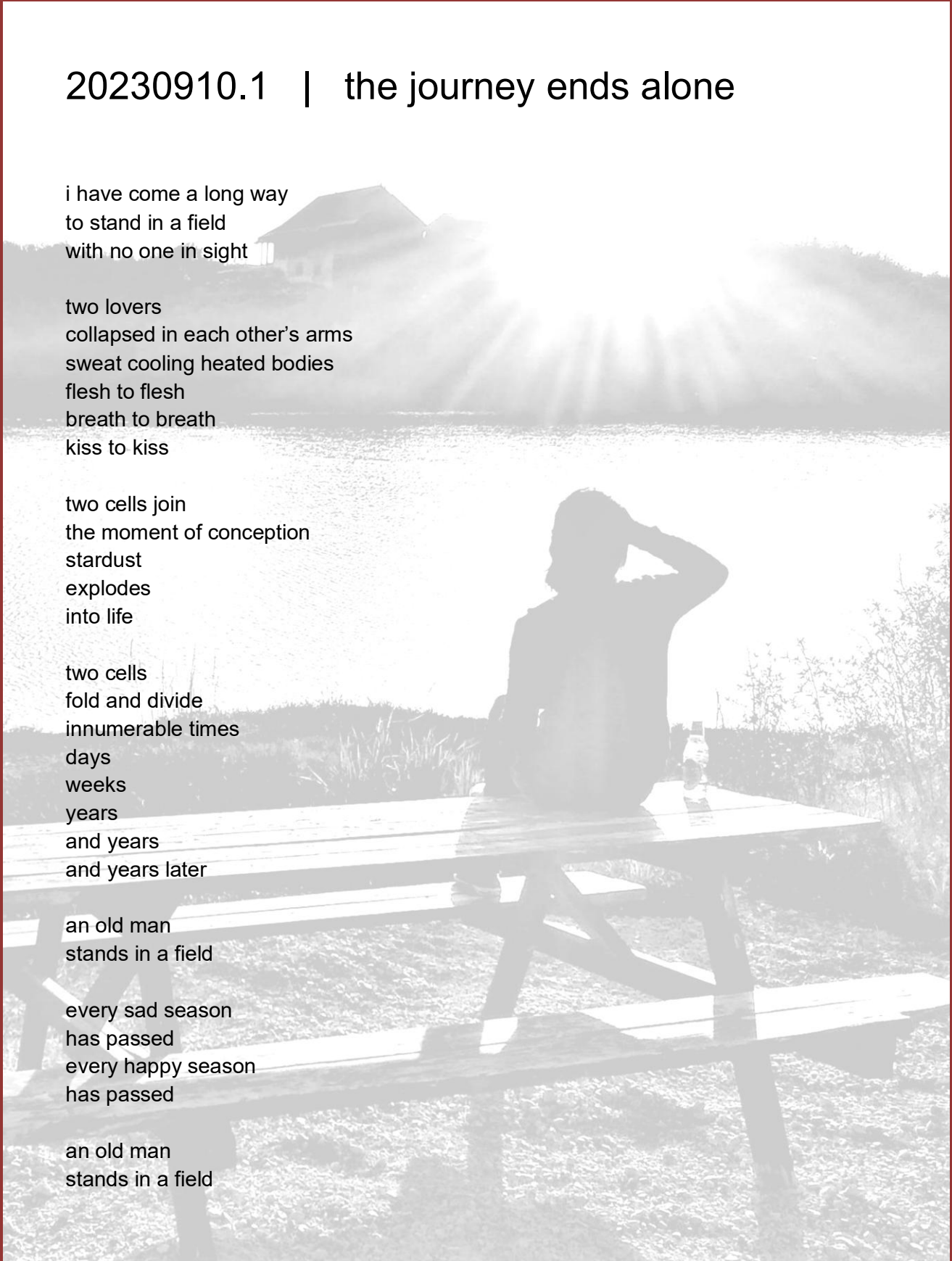
two cells join  
the moment of conception  
stardust  
explodes  
into life

two cells  
fold and divide  
innumerable times  
days  
weeks  
years  
and years  
and years later

an old man  
stands in a field

every sad season  
has passed  
every happy season  
has passed

an old man  
stands in a field



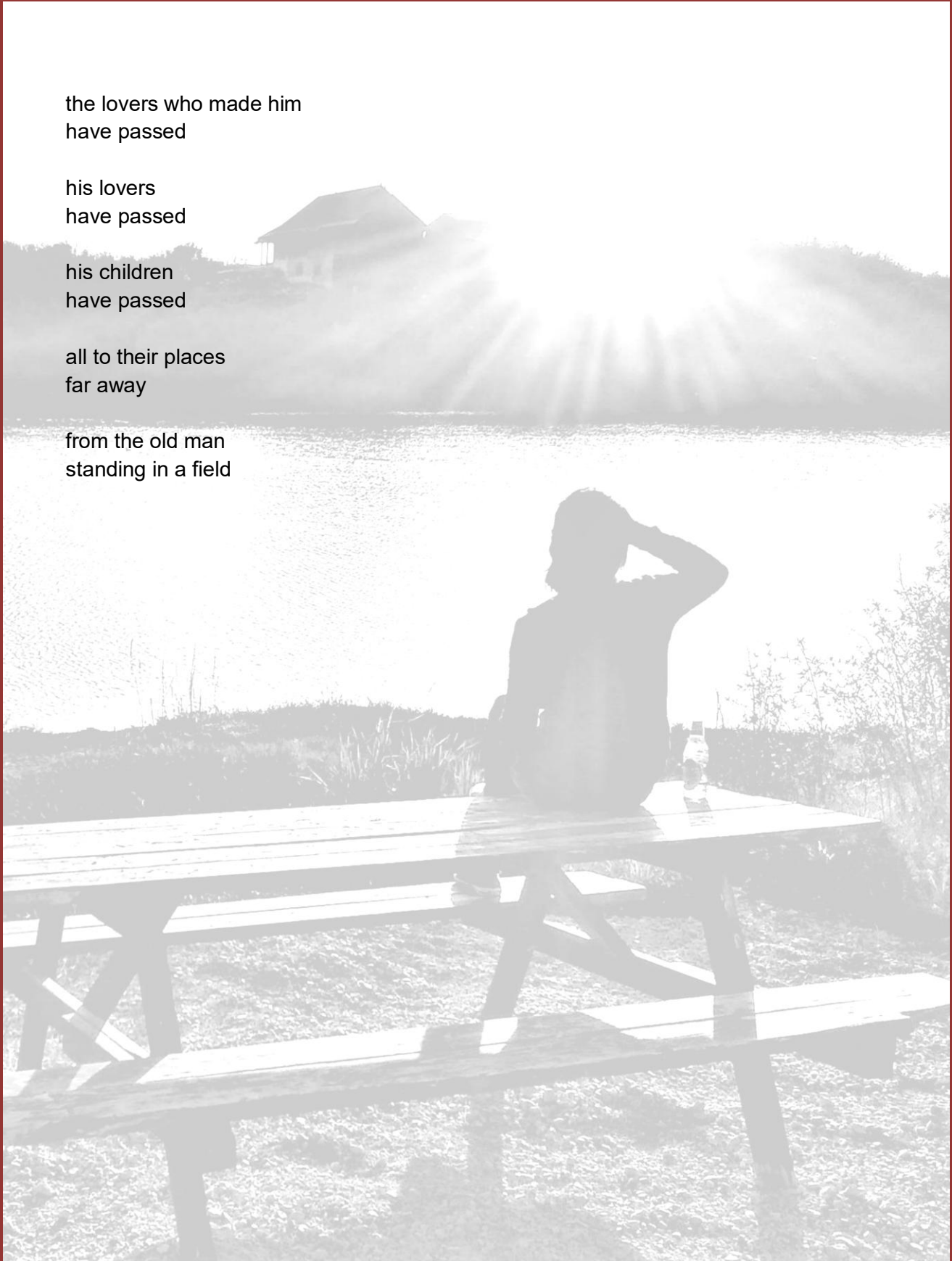
the lovers who made him  
have passed

his lovers  
have passed

his children  
have passed

all to their places  
far away

from the old man  
standing in a field



20230910.2 | flying in the storm

hawk  
alone  
flying in  
the storm

literal  
and  
metaphorical





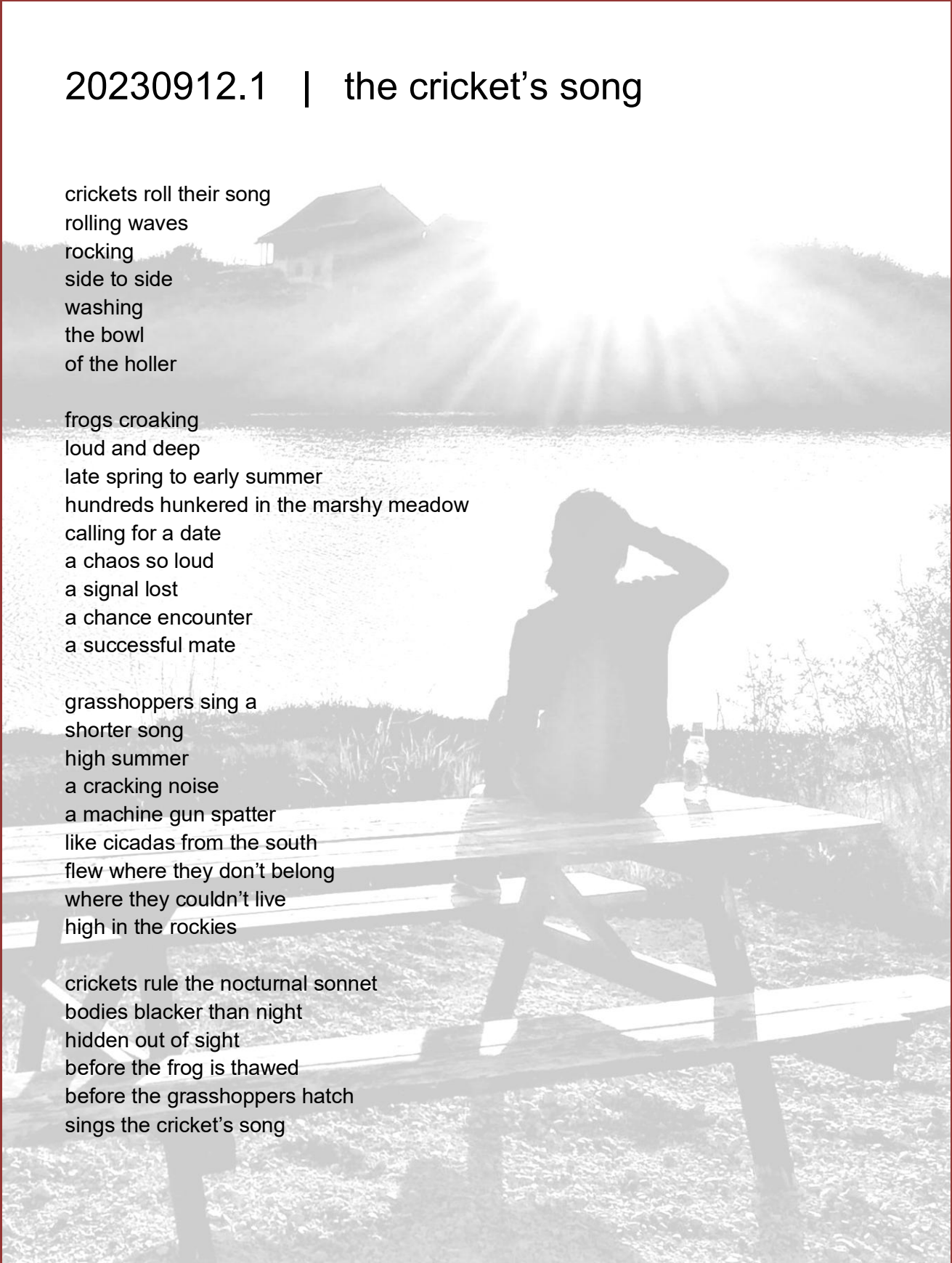
## 20230912.1 | the cricket's song

crickets roll their song  
rolling waves  
rocking  
side to side  
washing  
the bowl  
of the holler

frogs croaking  
loud and deep  
late spring to early summer  
hundreds hunkered in the marshy meadow  
calling for a date  
a chaos so loud  
a signal lost  
a chance encounter  
a successful mate

grasshoppers sing a  
shorter song  
high summer  
a cracking noise  
a machine gun spatter  
like cicadas from the south  
flew where they don't belong  
where they couldn't live  
high in the rockies

crickets rule the nocturnal sonnet  
bodies blacker than night  
hidden out of sight  
before the frog is thawed  
before the grasshoppers hatch  
sings the cricket's song



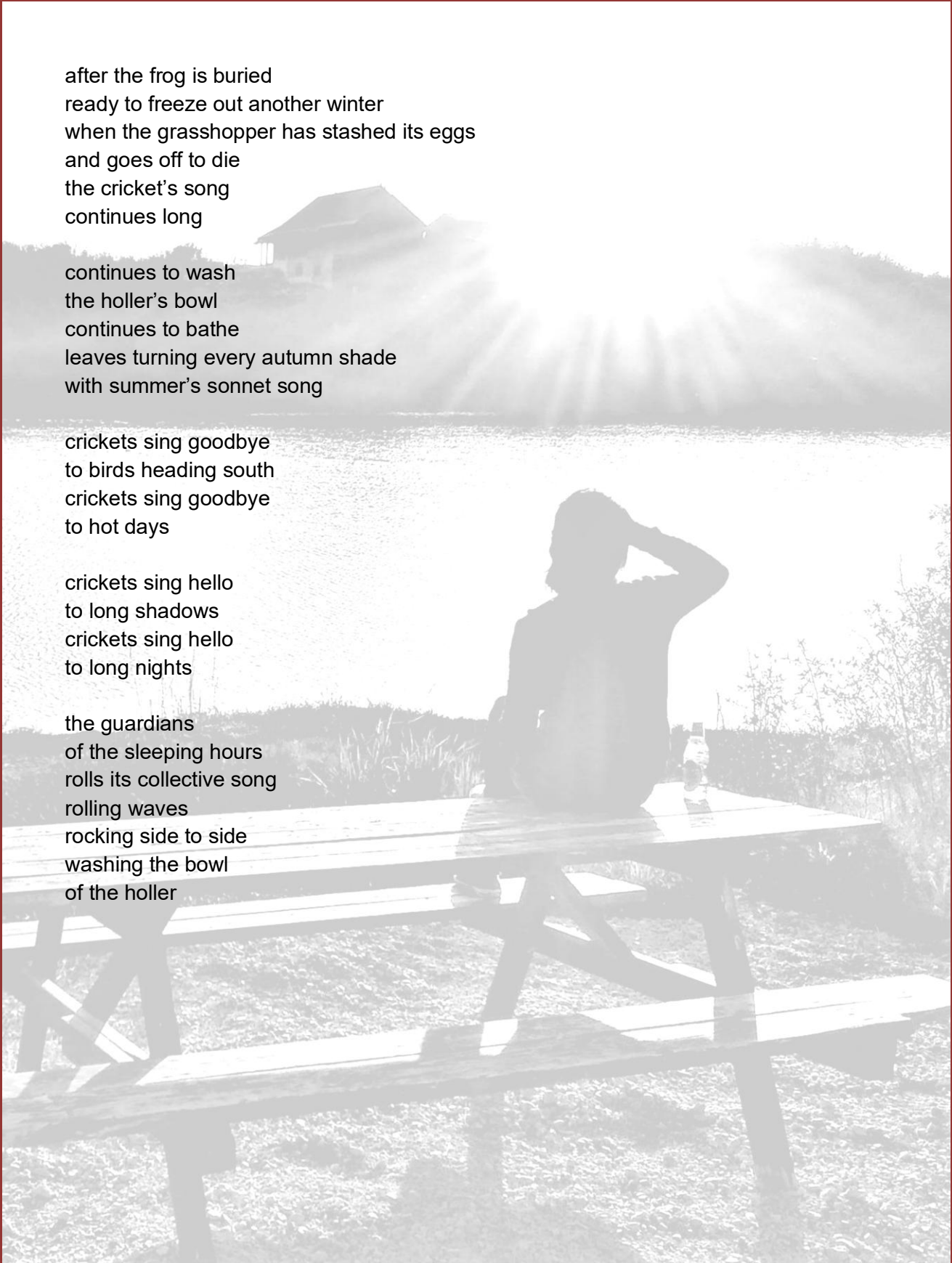
after the frog is buried  
ready to freeze out another winter  
when the grasshopper has stashed its eggs  
and goes off to die  
the cricket's song  
continues long

continues to wash  
the holler's bowl  
continues to bathe  
leaves turning every autumn shade  
with summer's sonnet song

crickets sing goodbye  
to birds heading south  
crickets sing goodbye  
to hot days

crickets sing hello  
to long shadows  
crickets sing hello  
to long nights

the guardians  
of the sleeping hours  
rolls its collective song  
rolling waves  
rocking side to side  
washing the bowl  
of the holler



20230912.2 | curtain call

summer's  
last  
sound

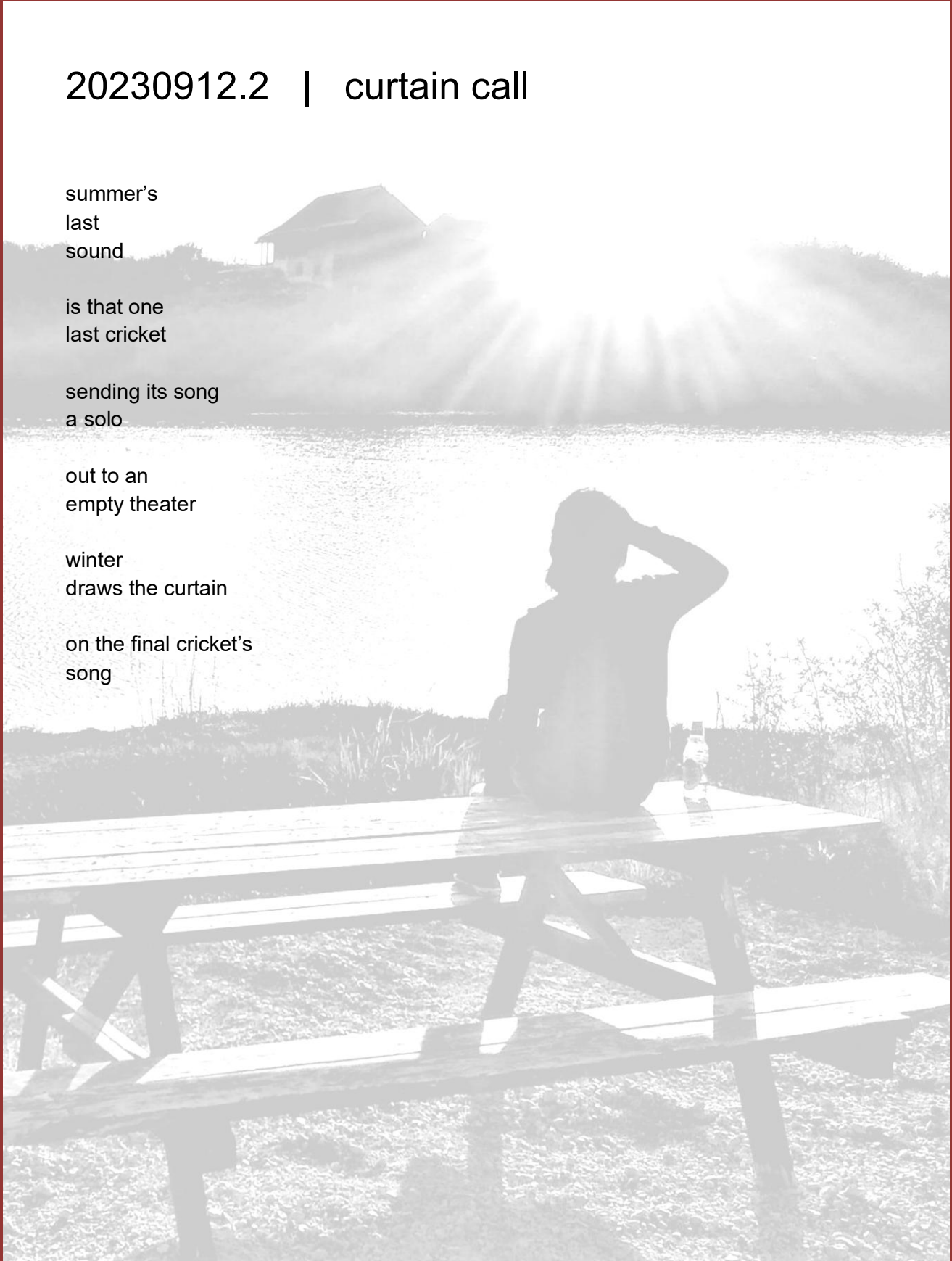
is that one  
last cricket

sending its song  
a solo

out to an  
empty theater

winter  
draws the curtain

on the final cricket's  
song



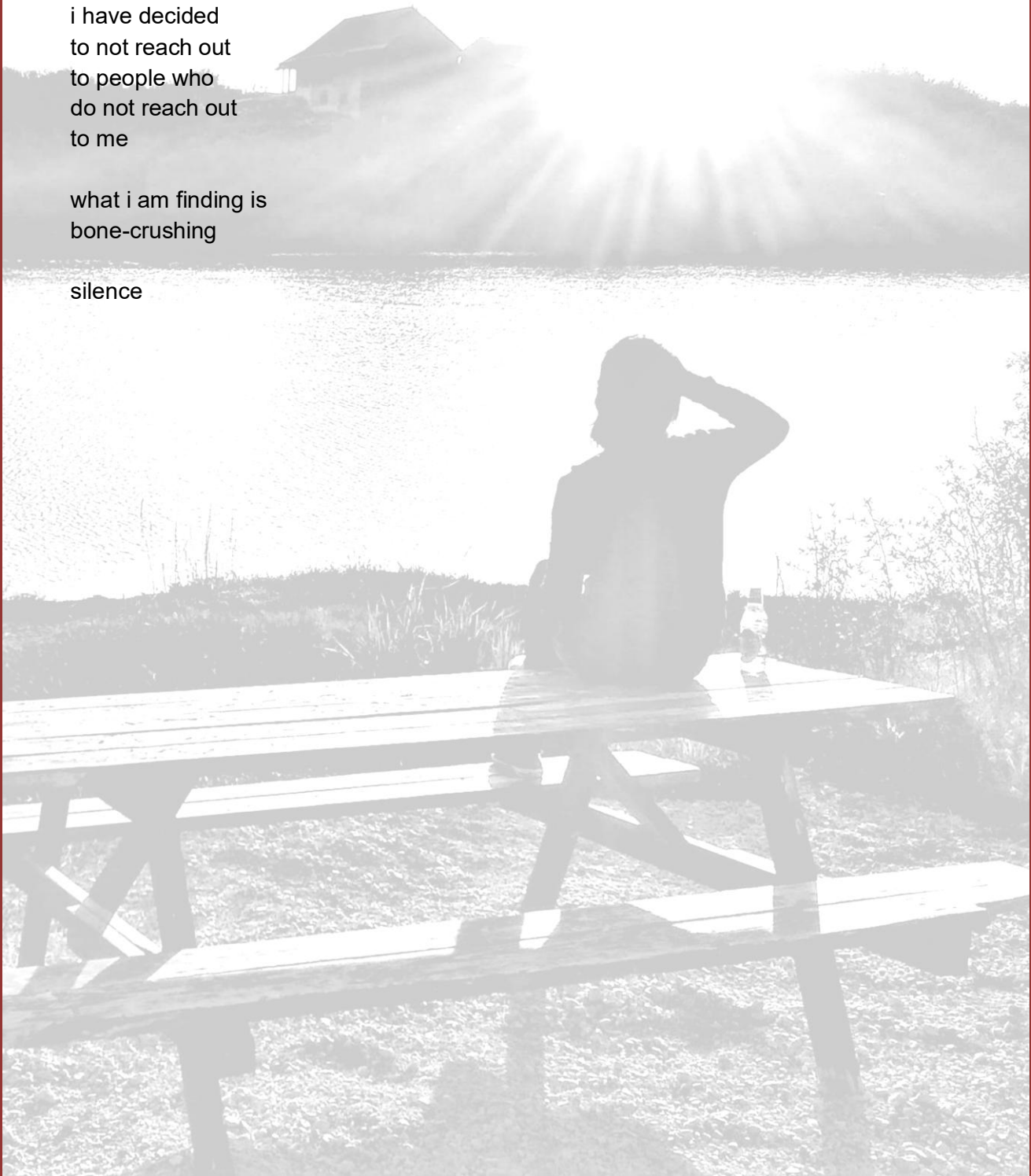


20230922.1 | bone-crushing

i have decided  
to not reach out  
to people who  
do not reach out  
to me

what i am finding is  
bone-crushing

silence



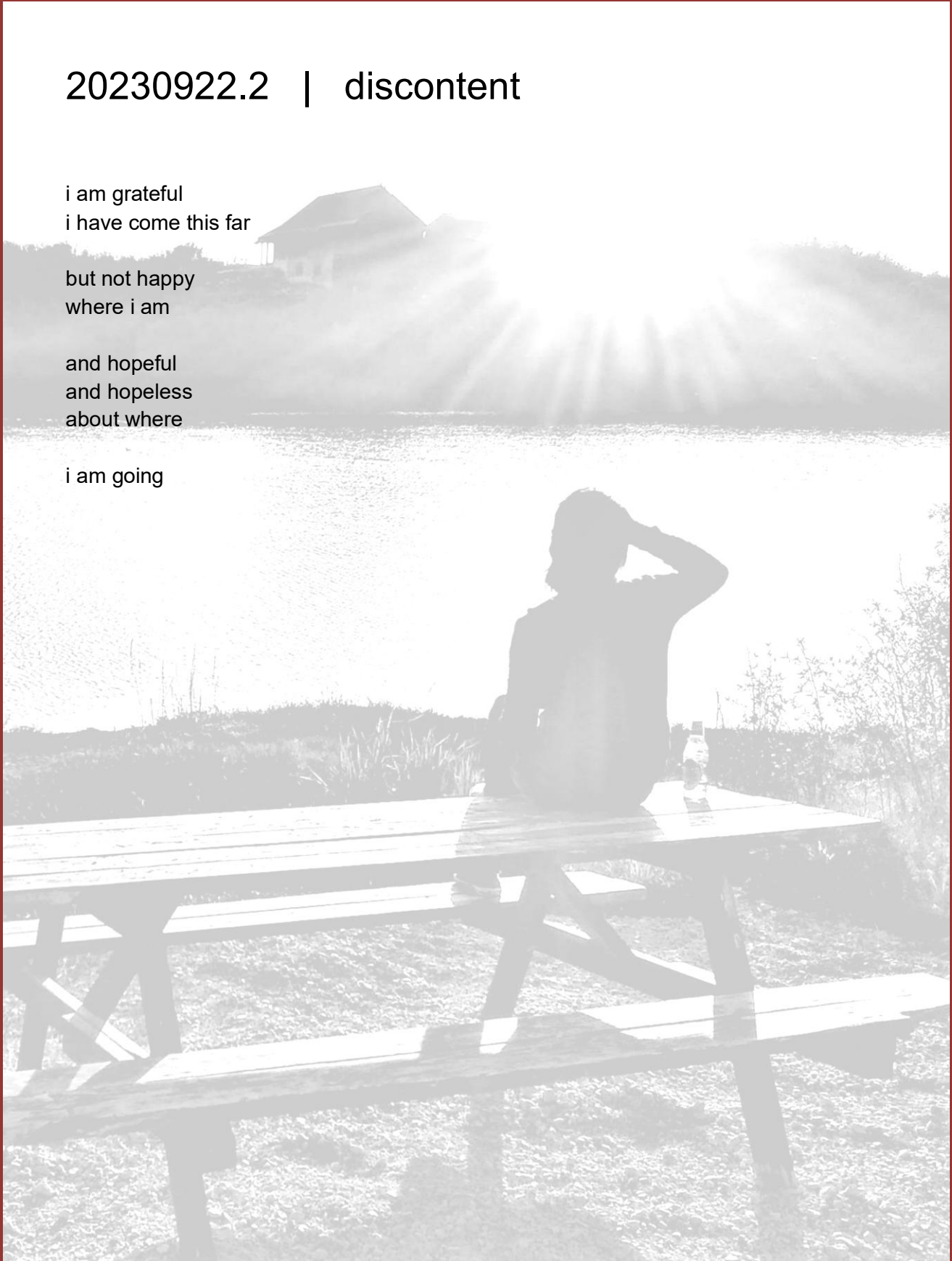
20230922.2 | discontent

i am grateful  
i have come this far

but not happy  
where i am

and hopeful  
and hopeless  
about where

i am going



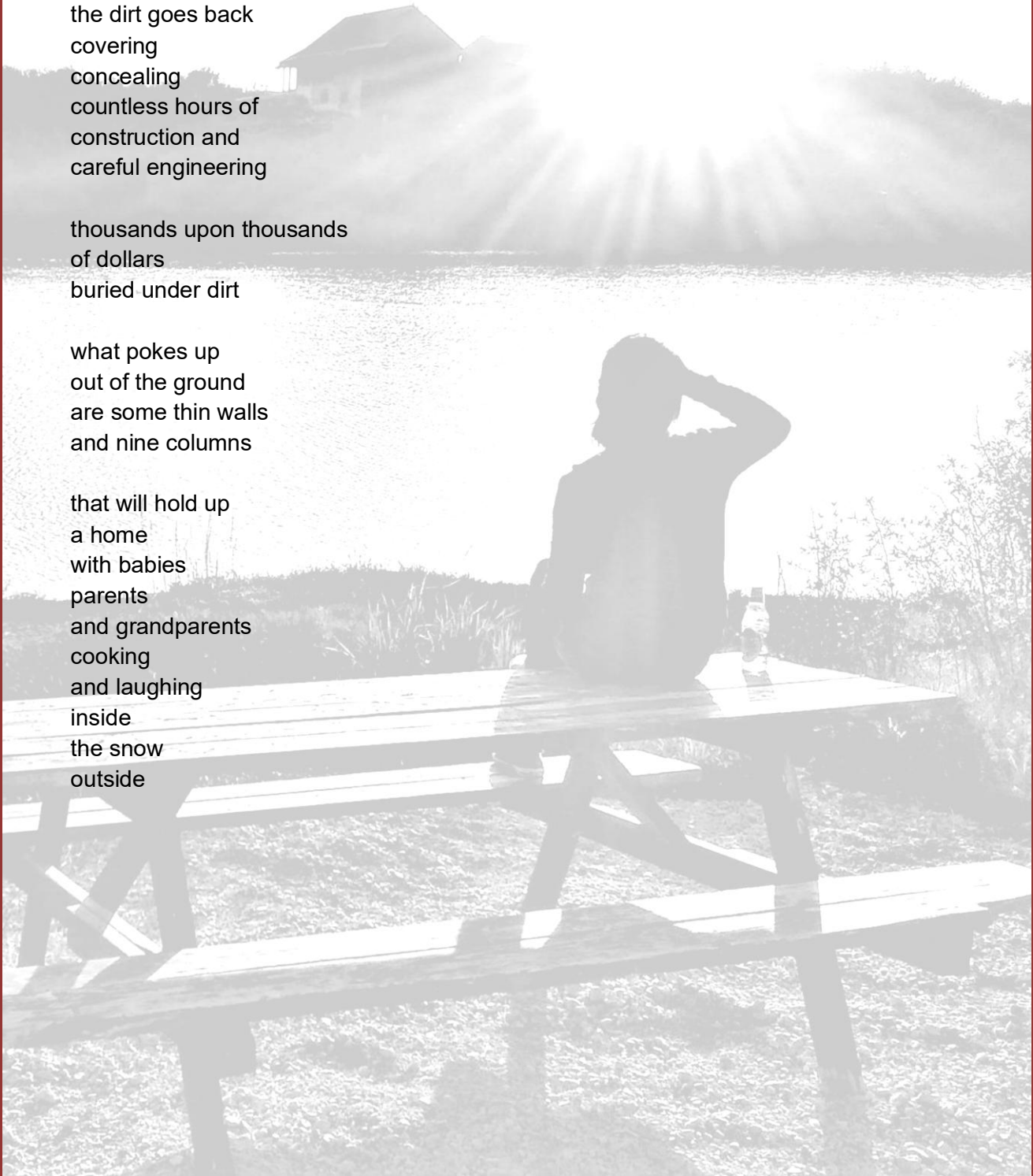
## 20230922.3 | vision

the dirt goes back  
covering  
concealing  
countless hours of  
construction and  
careful engineering

thousands upon thousands  
of dollars  
buried under dirt

what pokes up  
out of the ground  
are some thin walls  
and nine columns

that will hold up  
a home  
with babies  
parents  
and grandparents  
cooking  
and laughing  
inside  
the snow  
outside





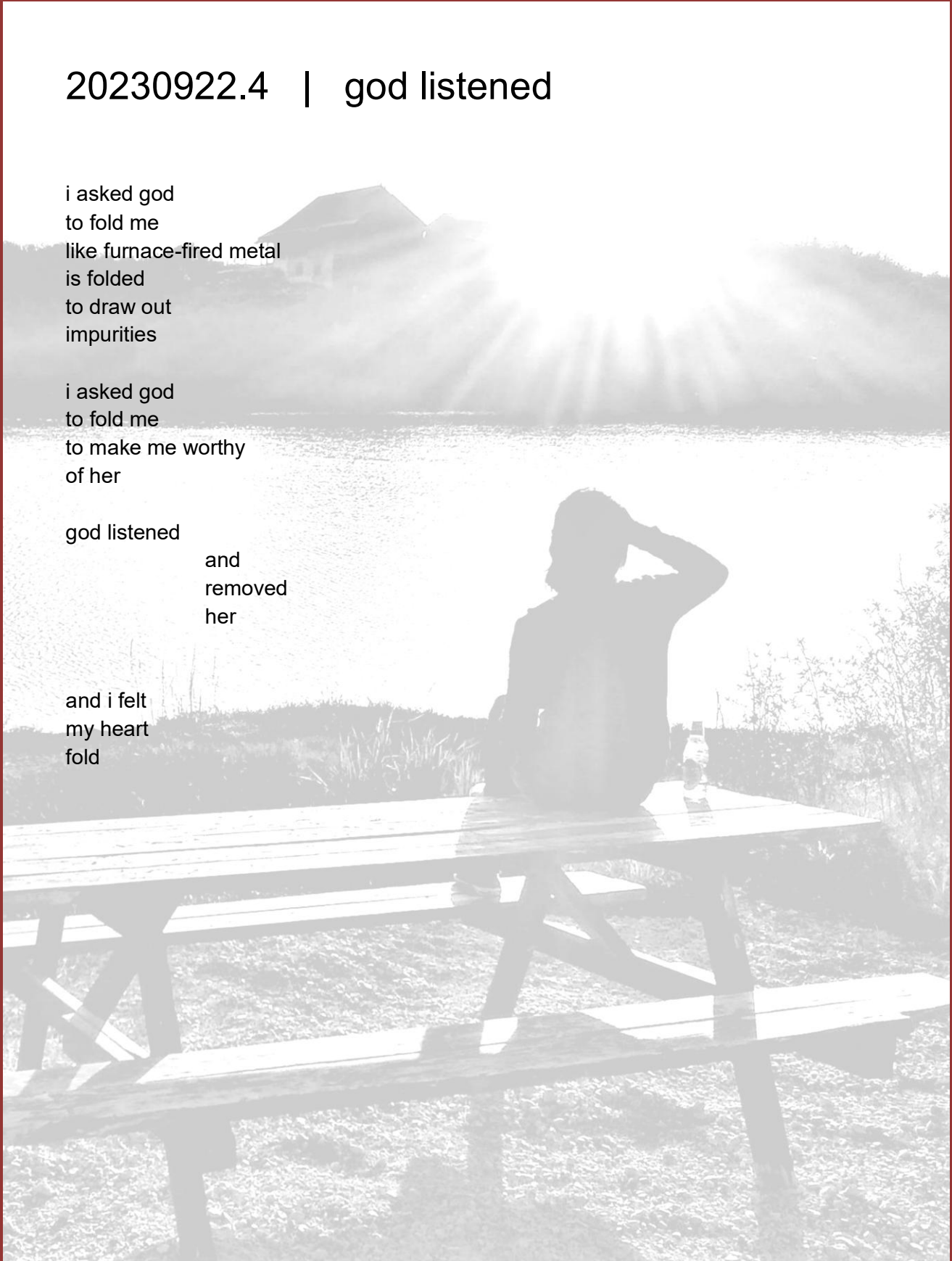
20230922.4 | god listened

i asked god  
to fold me  
like furnace-fired metal  
is folded  
to draw out  
impurities

i asked god  
to fold me  
to make me worthy  
of her

god listened  
and  
removed  
her

and i felt  
my heart  
fold



20230922.5 | over time

there are two leaves  
pressed in this book

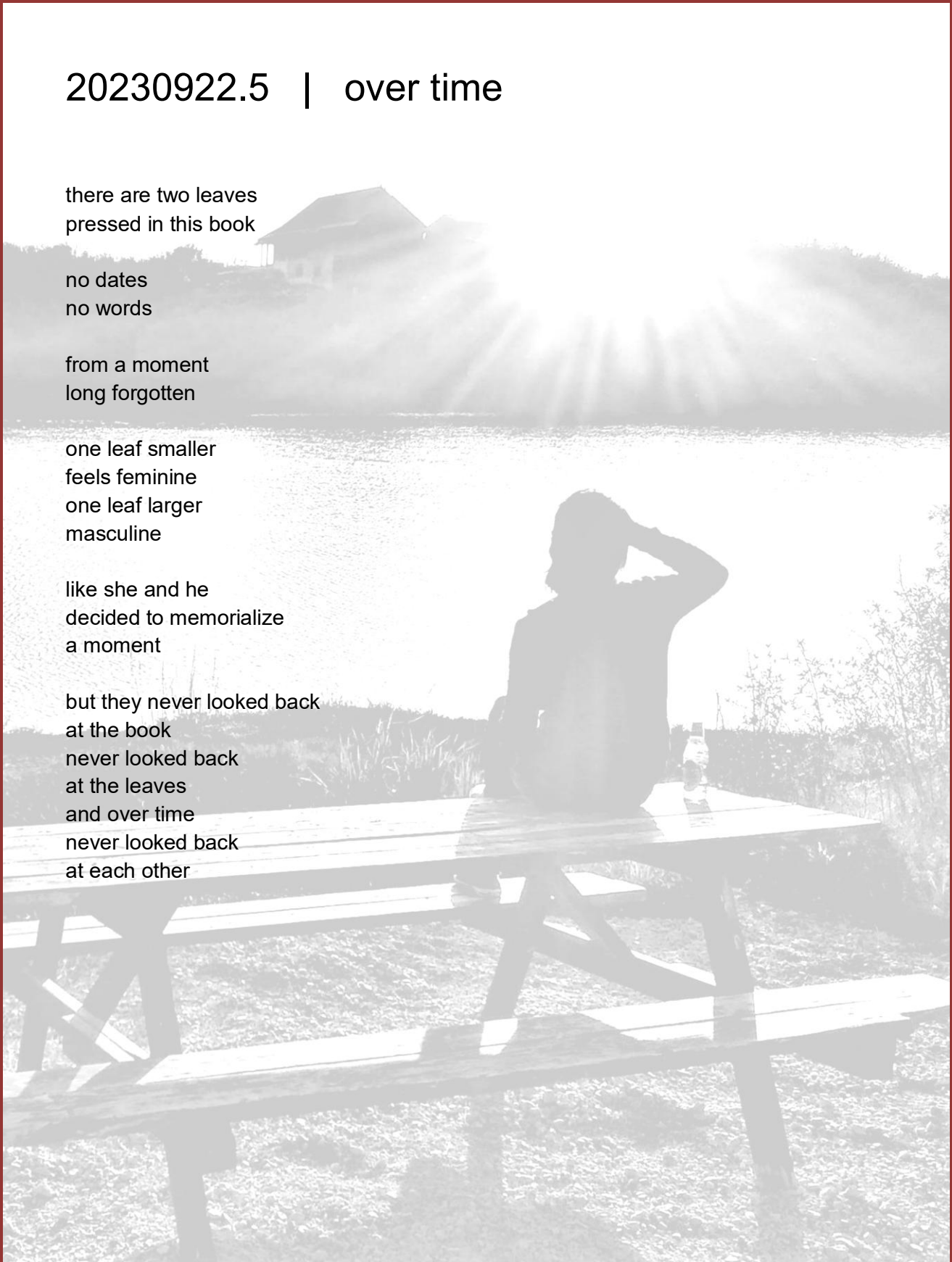
no dates  
no words

from a moment  
long forgotten

one leaf smaller  
feels feminine  
one leaf larger  
masculine

like she and he  
decided to memorialize  
a moment

but they never looked back  
at the book  
never looked back  
at the leaves  
and over time  
never looked back  
at each other



## 20230928.1 | the nature of things

a rodent made a home  
in my rv's ac unit  
he sleeps during the day  
and works when i want to sleep  
he's been there two weeks  
my home is starting to smell  
like his home  
like a giant hamster cage

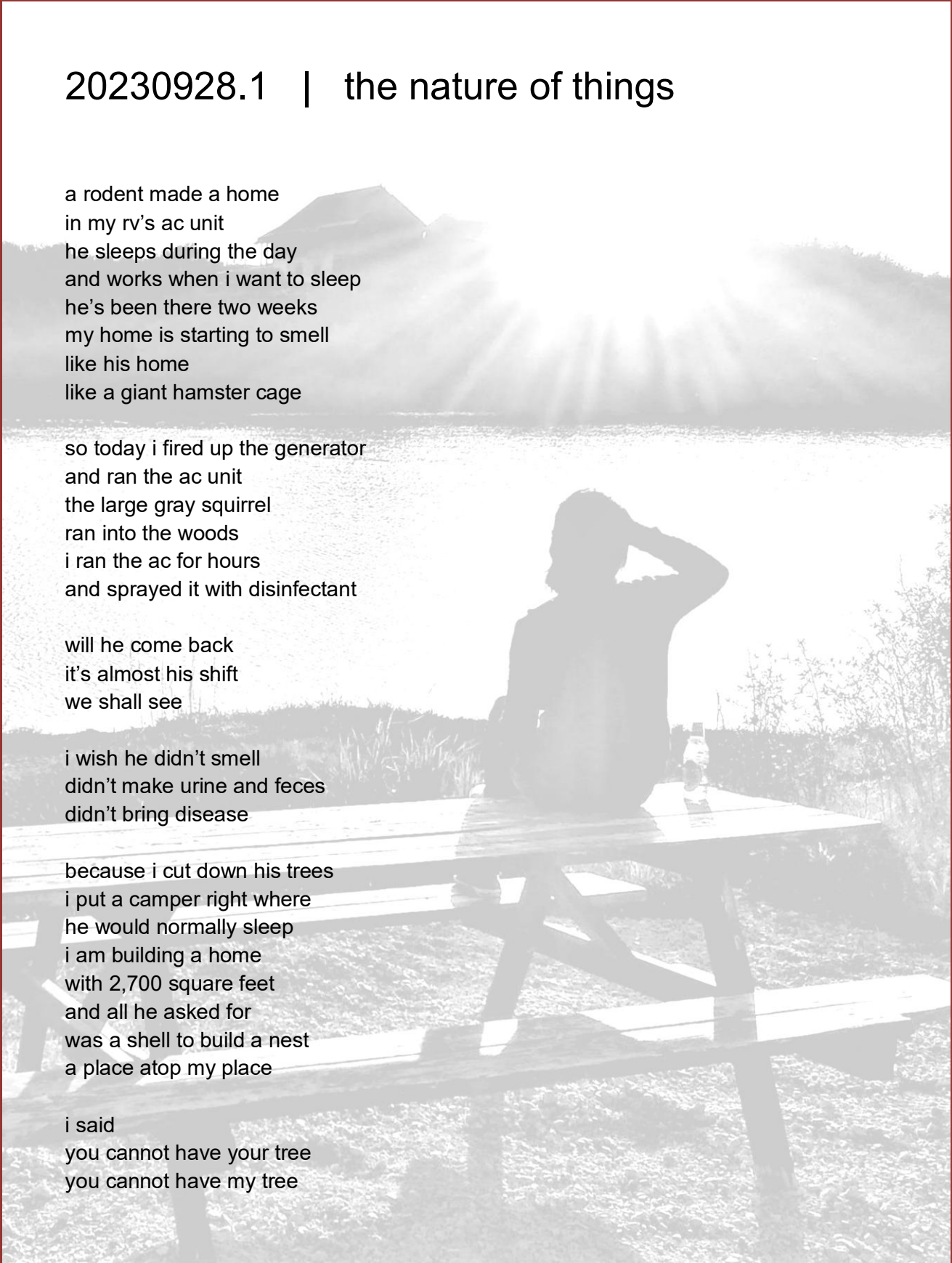
so today i fired up the generator  
and ran the ac unit  
the large gray squirrel  
ran into the woods  
i ran the ac for hours  
and sprayed it with disinfectant

will he come back  
it's almost his shift  
we shall see

i wish he didn't smell  
didn't make urine and feces  
didn't bring disease

because i cut down his trees  
i put a camper right where  
he would normally sleep  
i am building a home  
with 2,700 square feet  
and all he asked for  
was a shell to build a nest  
a place atop my place

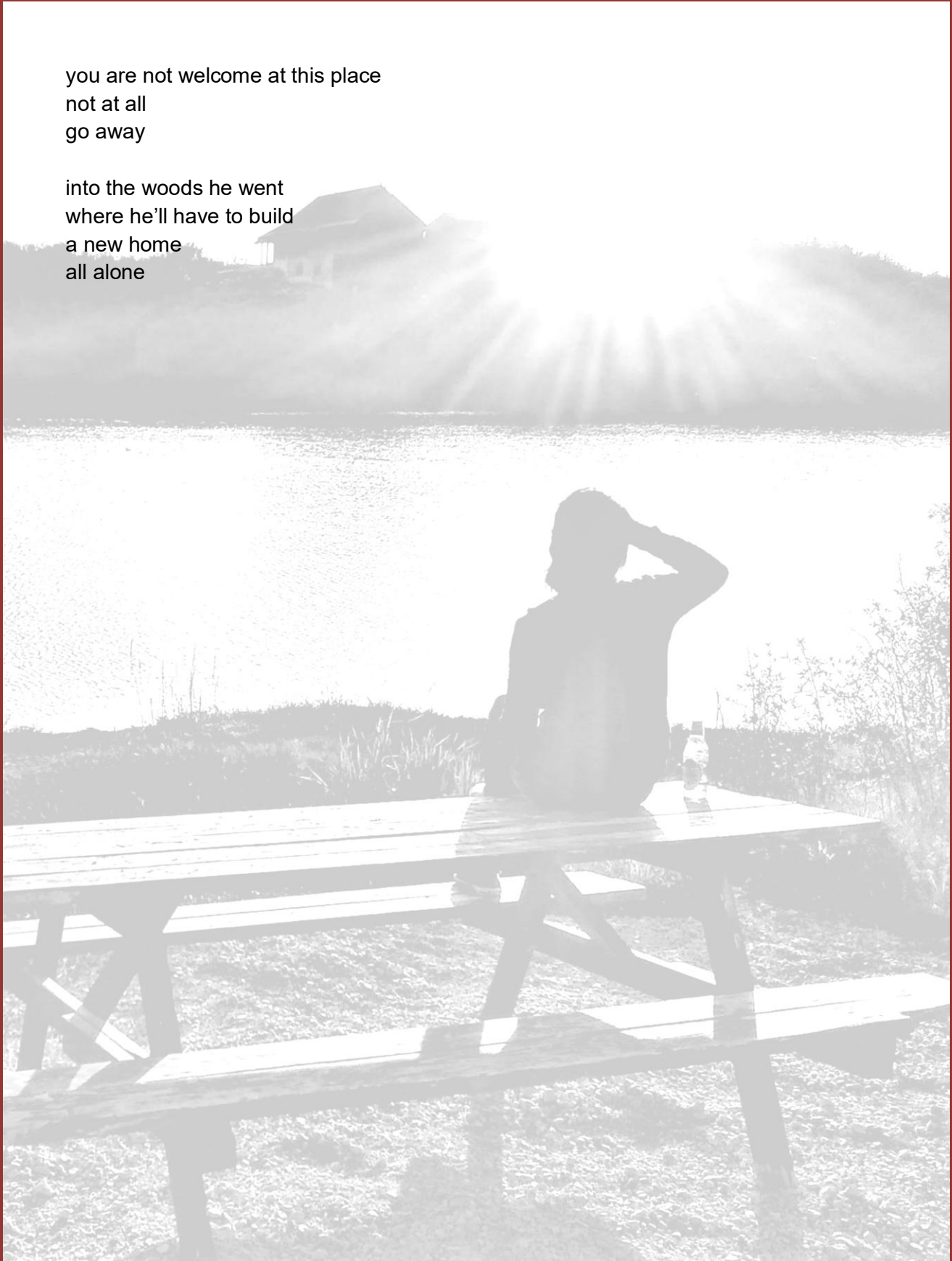
i said  
you cannot have your tree  
you cannot have my tree





you are not welcome at this place  
not at all  
go away

into the woods he went  
where he'll have to build  
a new home  
all alone



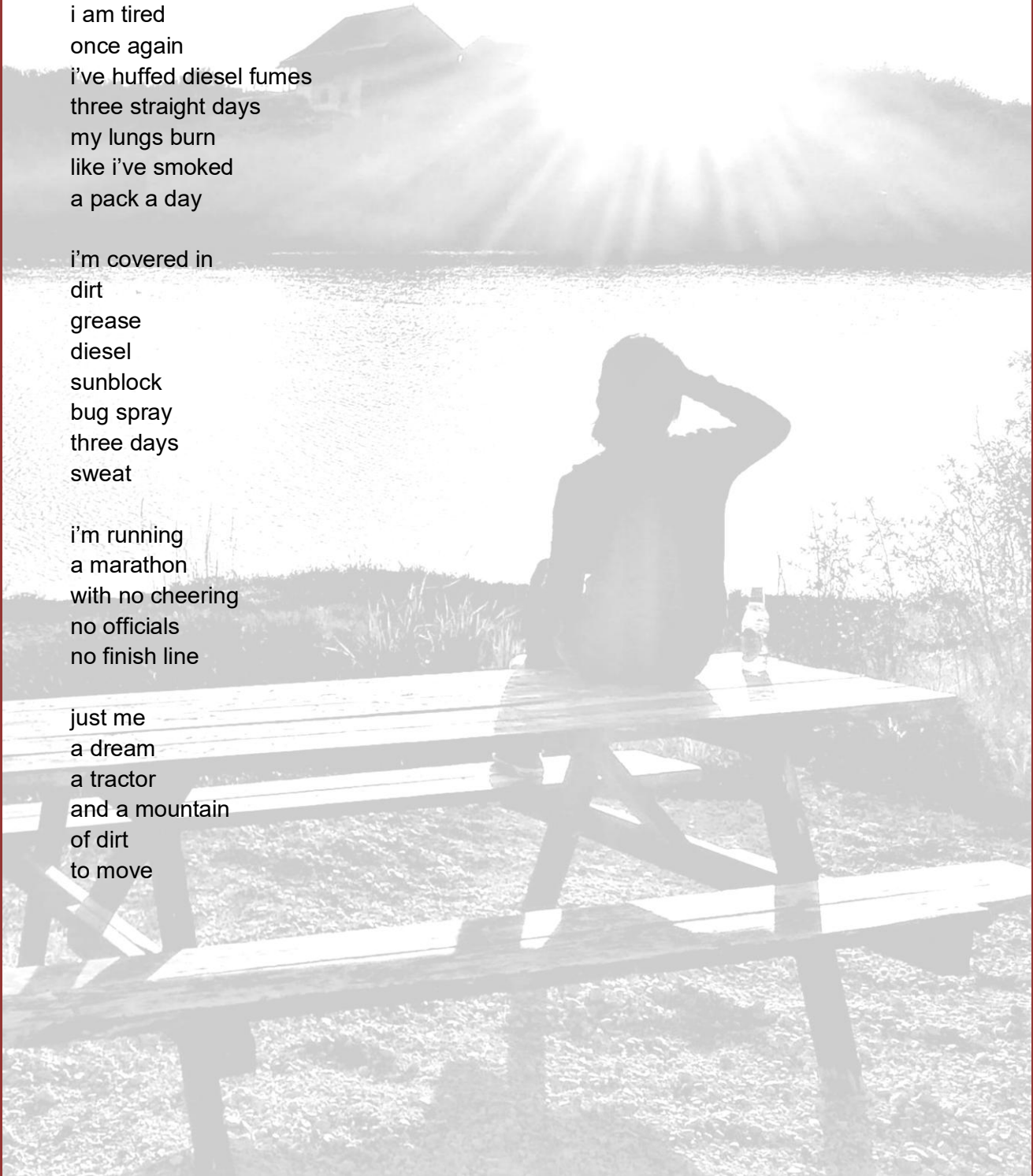
## 20230930.1 | building dreams

i am tired  
once again  
i've huffed diesel fumes  
three straight days  
my lungs burn  
like i've smoked  
a pack a day

i'm covered in  
dirt  
grease  
diesel  
sunblock  
bug spray  
three days  
sweat

i'm running  
a marathon  
with no cheering  
no officials  
no finish line

just me  
a dream  
a tractor  
and a mountain  
of dirt  
to move



## 20231008.1 | schrodinger's cat

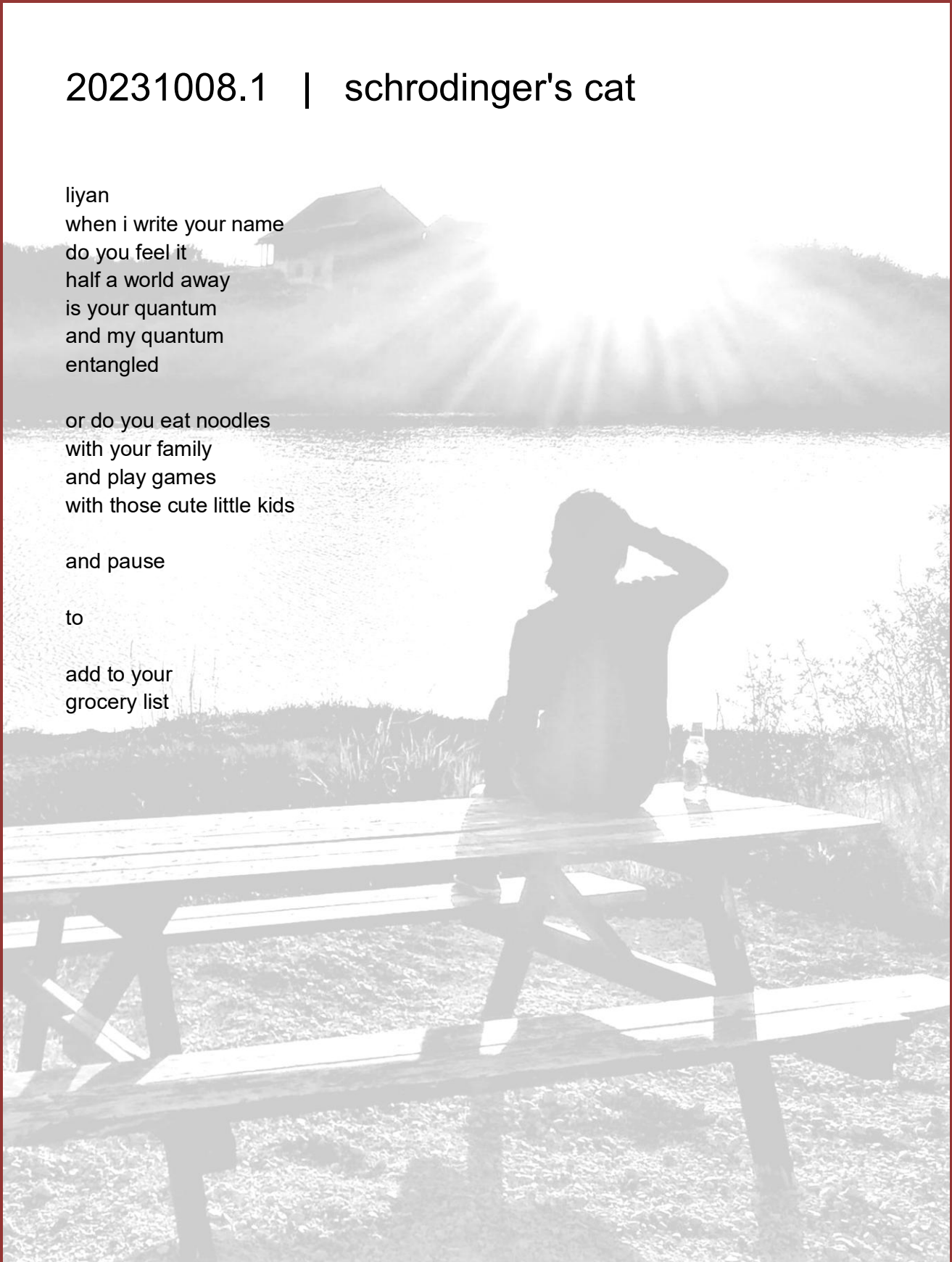
liyan  
when i write your name  
do you feel it  
half a world away  
is your quantum  
and my quantum  
entangled

or do you eat noodles  
with your family  
and play games  
with those cute little kids

and pause

to

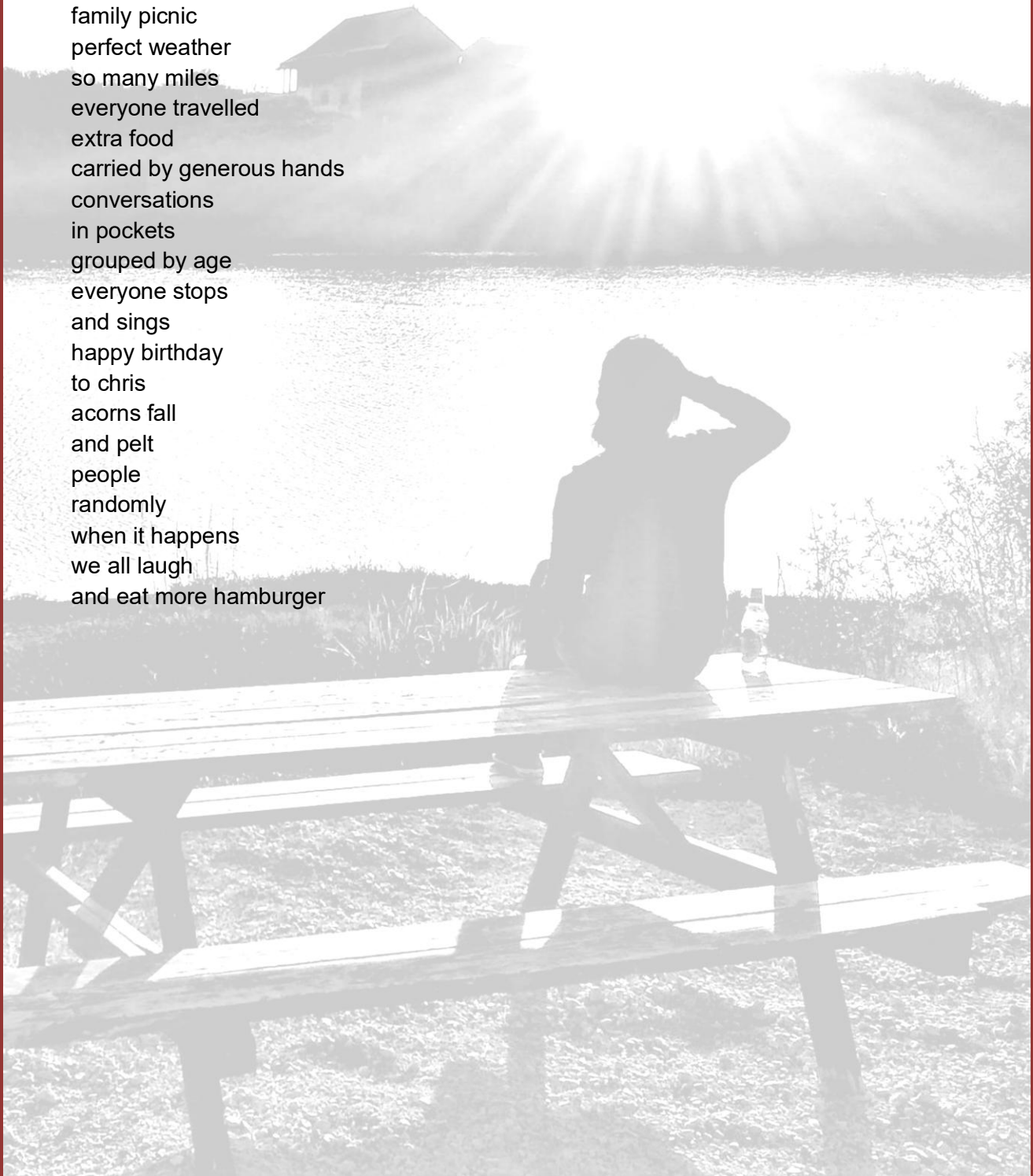
add to your  
grocery list





## 20231008.2 | family picnic oct 7 2023

family picnic  
perfect weather  
so many miles  
everyone travelled  
extra food  
carried by generous hands  
conversations  
in pockets  
grouped by age  
everyone stops  
and sings  
happy birthday  
to chris  
acorns fall  
and pelt  
people  
randomly  
when it happens  
we all laugh  
and eat more hamburger



## 20231015.1 | silence like skin

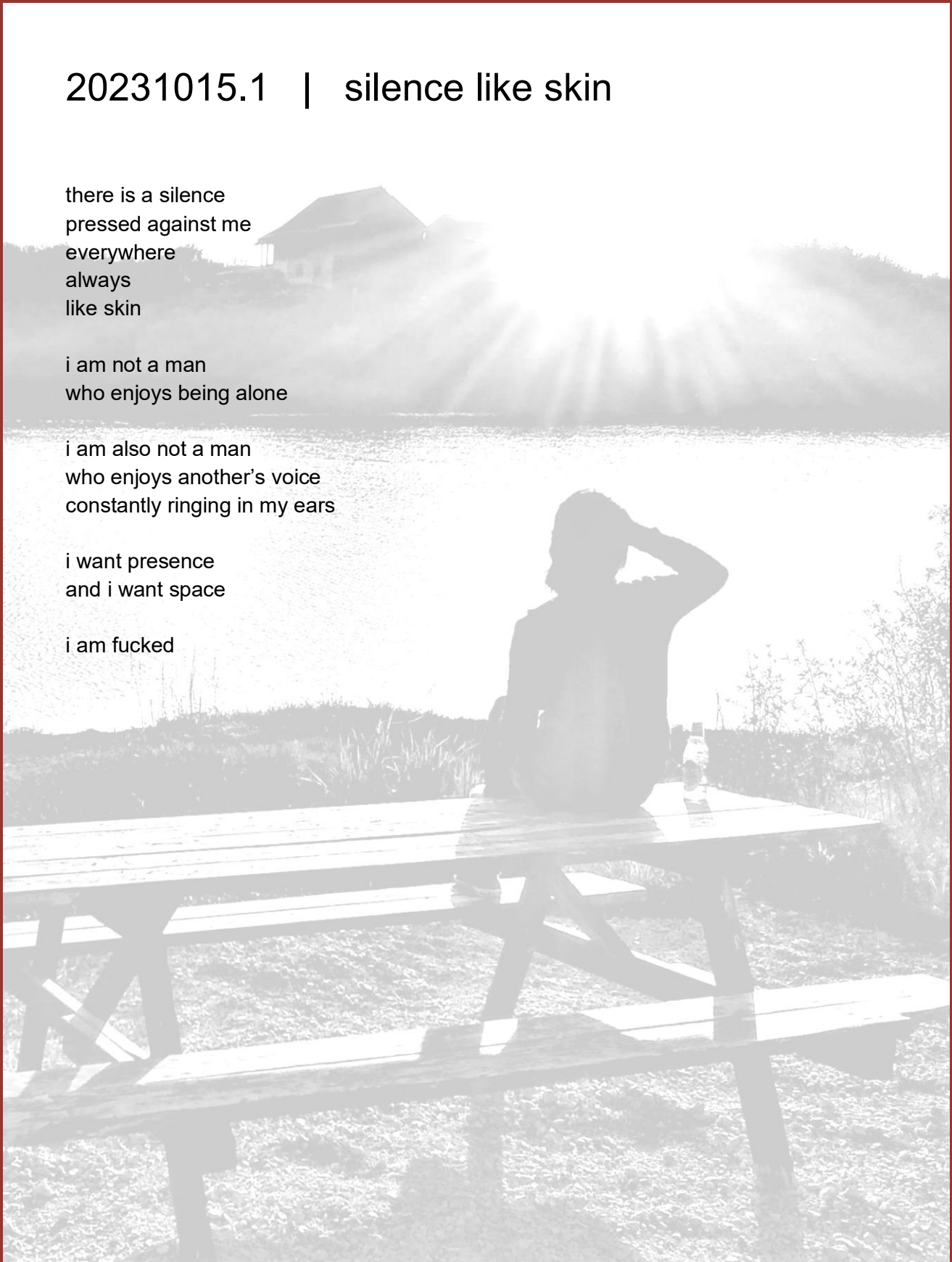
there is a silence  
pressed against me  
everywhere  
always  
like skin

i am not a man  
who enjoys being alone

i am also not a man  
who enjoys another's voice  
constantly ringing in my ears

i want presence  
and i want space

i am fucked



20231015.2 | gallows of love

A black and white photograph of a person sitting on a wooden picnic table by a body of water. The person is seen from behind, looking towards a house on a hill in the distance. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong lens flare effect. A water bottle is on the table next to the person.

love  
|  
hangs  
|  
feet dangling  
|  
neck  
|  
contorted  
|  
love hangs heavy  
|  
in the heart



## 20231015.3 | imagery of poetry

[sections quoted or adapted from other admired poets]

earthly fates  
loud omissions  
the chimney sweep  
the undertaker  
the sanitary inspector  
pause their work

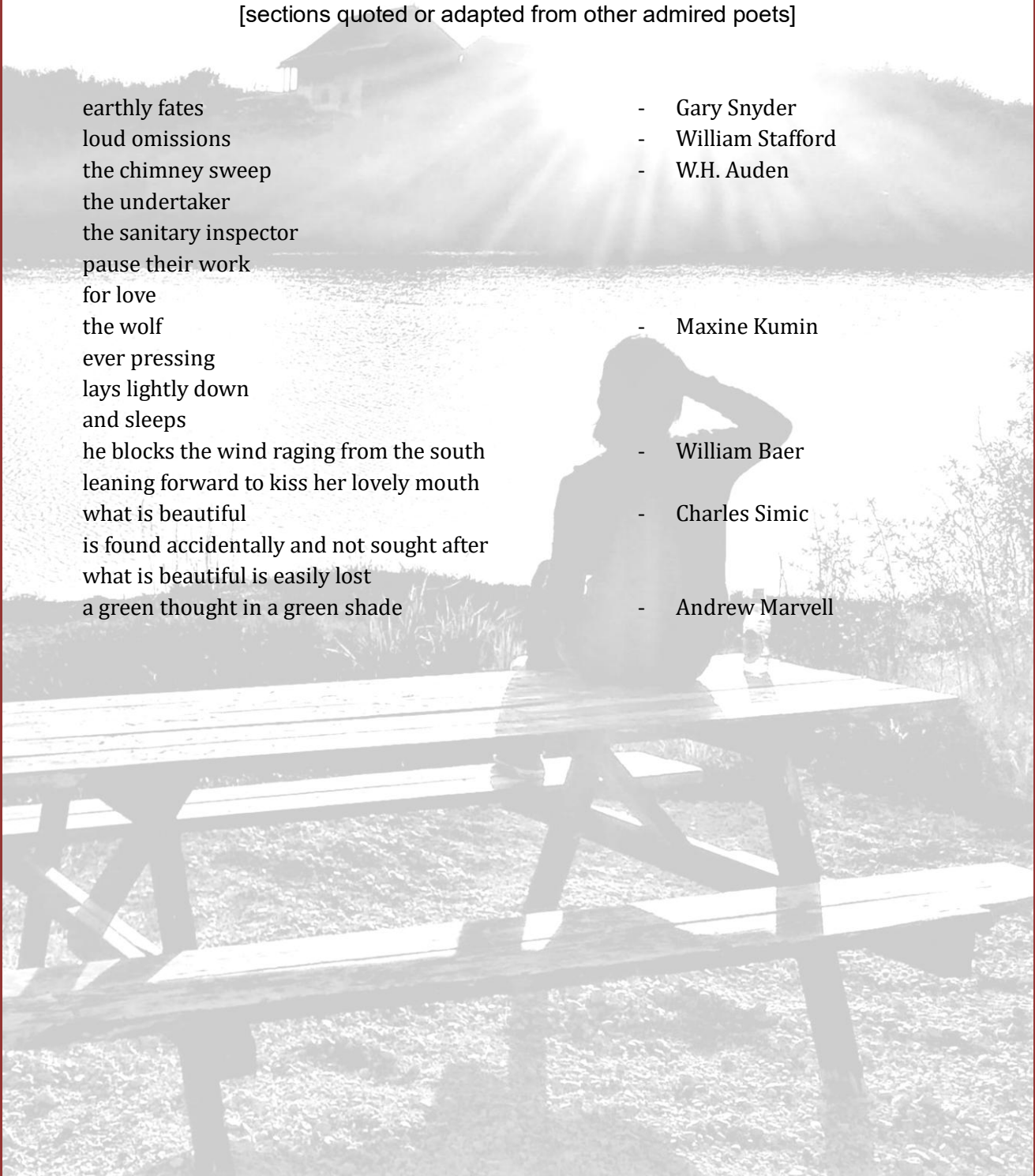
- Gary Snyder
- William Stafford
- W.H. Auden

for love  
the wolf  
ever pressing  
lays lightly down  
and sleeps

- Maxine Kumin

he blocks the wind raging from the south  
leaning forward to kiss her lovely mouth  
what is beautiful  
is found accidentally and not sought after  
what is beautiful is easily lost  
a green thought in a green shade

- William Baer
- Charles Simic
- Andrew Marvell



## 20231015.4 | winter is coming

the grasses have yellowed  
and are laying sideways  
on the meadow floor

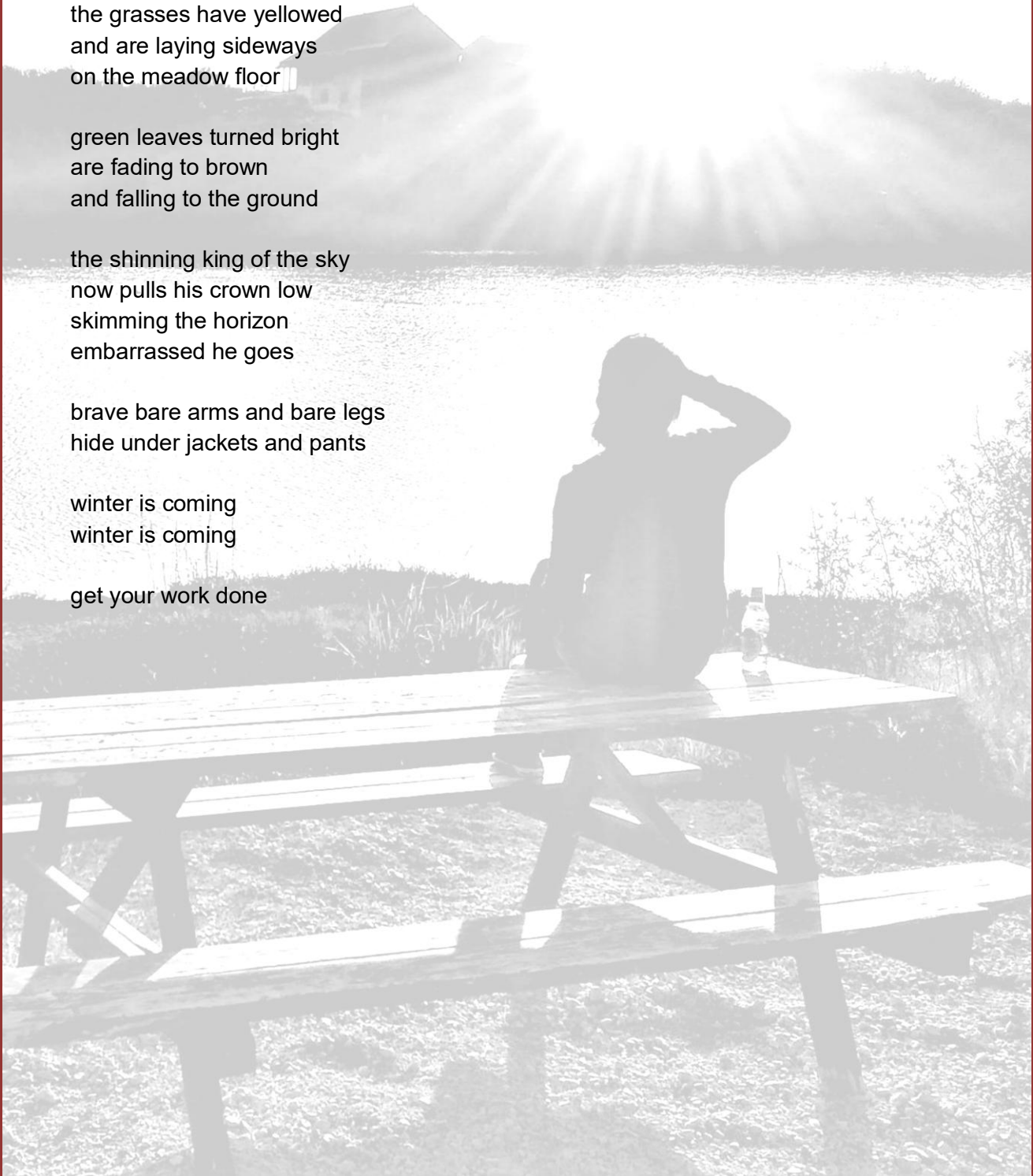
green leaves turned bright  
are fading to brown  
and falling to the ground

the shinning king of the sky  
now pulls his crown low  
skimming the horizon  
embarrassed he goes

brave bare arms and bare legs  
hide under jackets and pants

winter is coming  
winter is coming

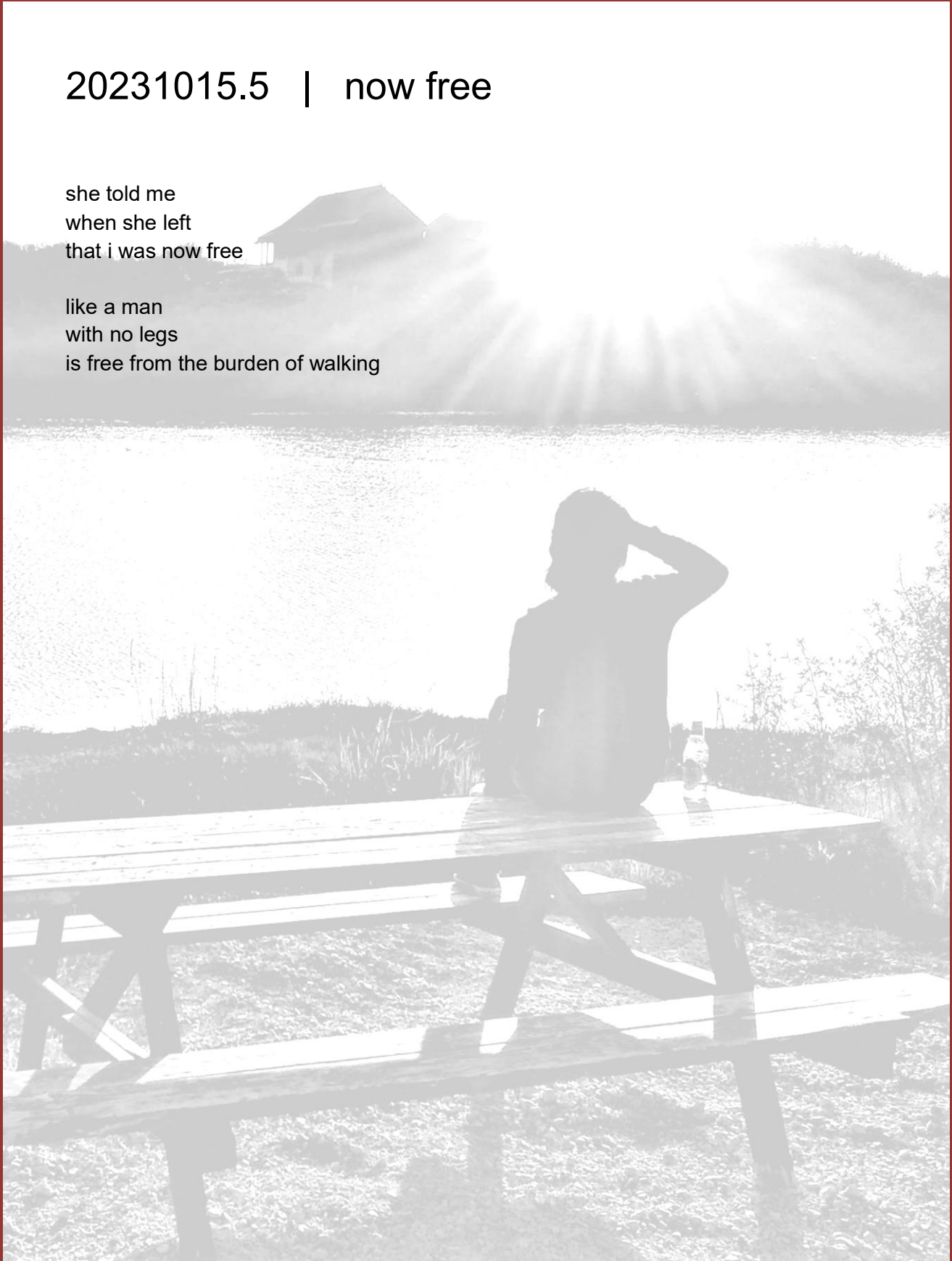
get your work done



20231015.5 | now free

she told me  
when she left  
that i was now free

like a man  
with no legs  
is free from the burden of walking





## 20231027.1 | inheritance is empty

"Oh, if instead she'd left to me  
the thing she took into the grave! ---"

Edna St. Vincent Millay

they give the spark of life  
they give the labor of love  
to raise a child  
they provide food  
shelter  
instruction

they are the emergency responders  
to our heart, our health, our wallet, our panic, our pride

they pace with us  
close or distant  
most the decades of our life

then

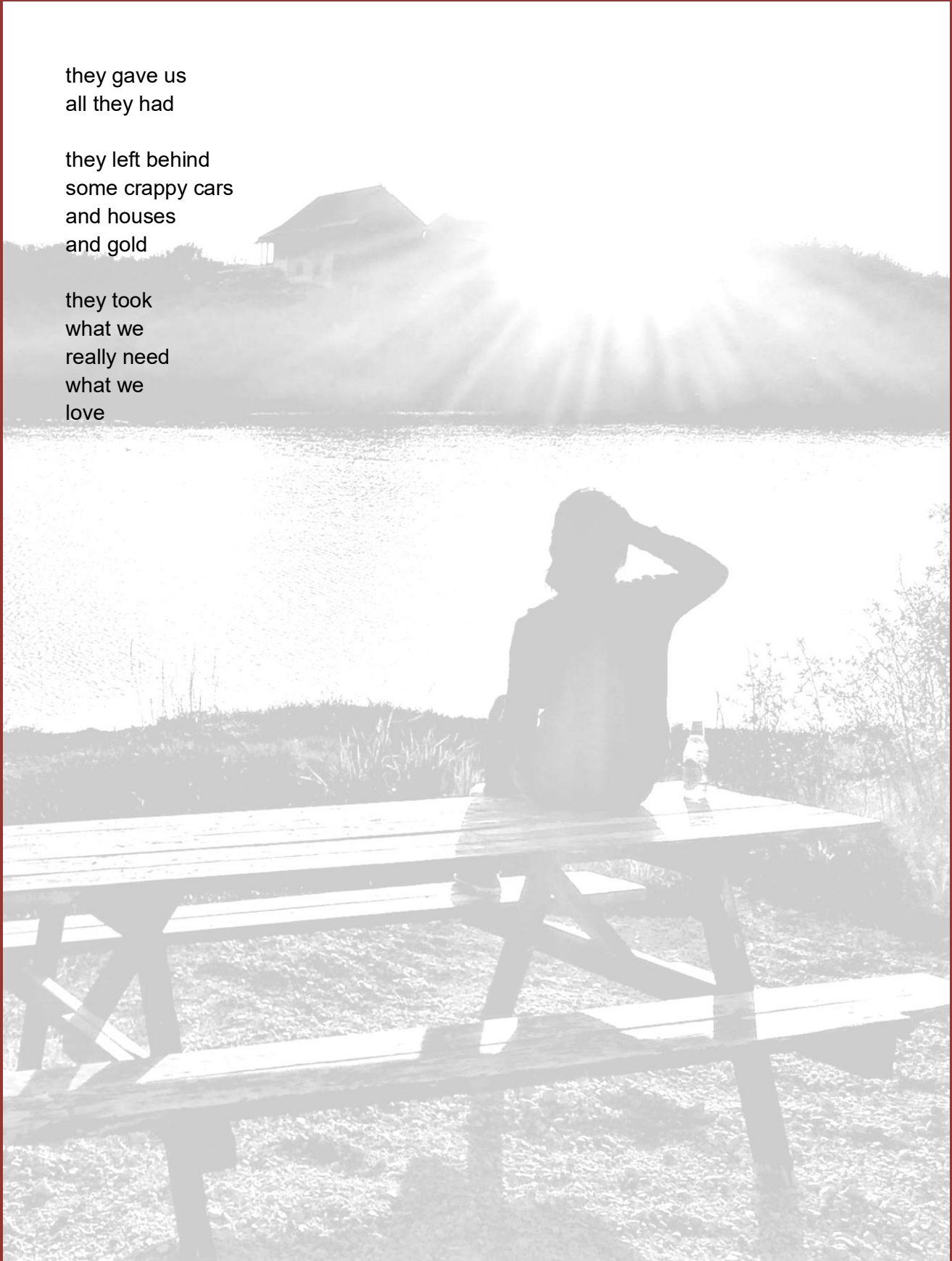
like a cold autumn evening  
as the sun draws low  
they pass  
as wind through the trees

all that is left  
is an arm not touched  
frightening silence in empty ears  
a swirling mind  
a clenched chest  
a crushed heart

they gave us  
all they had

they left behind  
some crappy cars  
and houses  
and gold

they took  
what we  
really need  
what we  
love

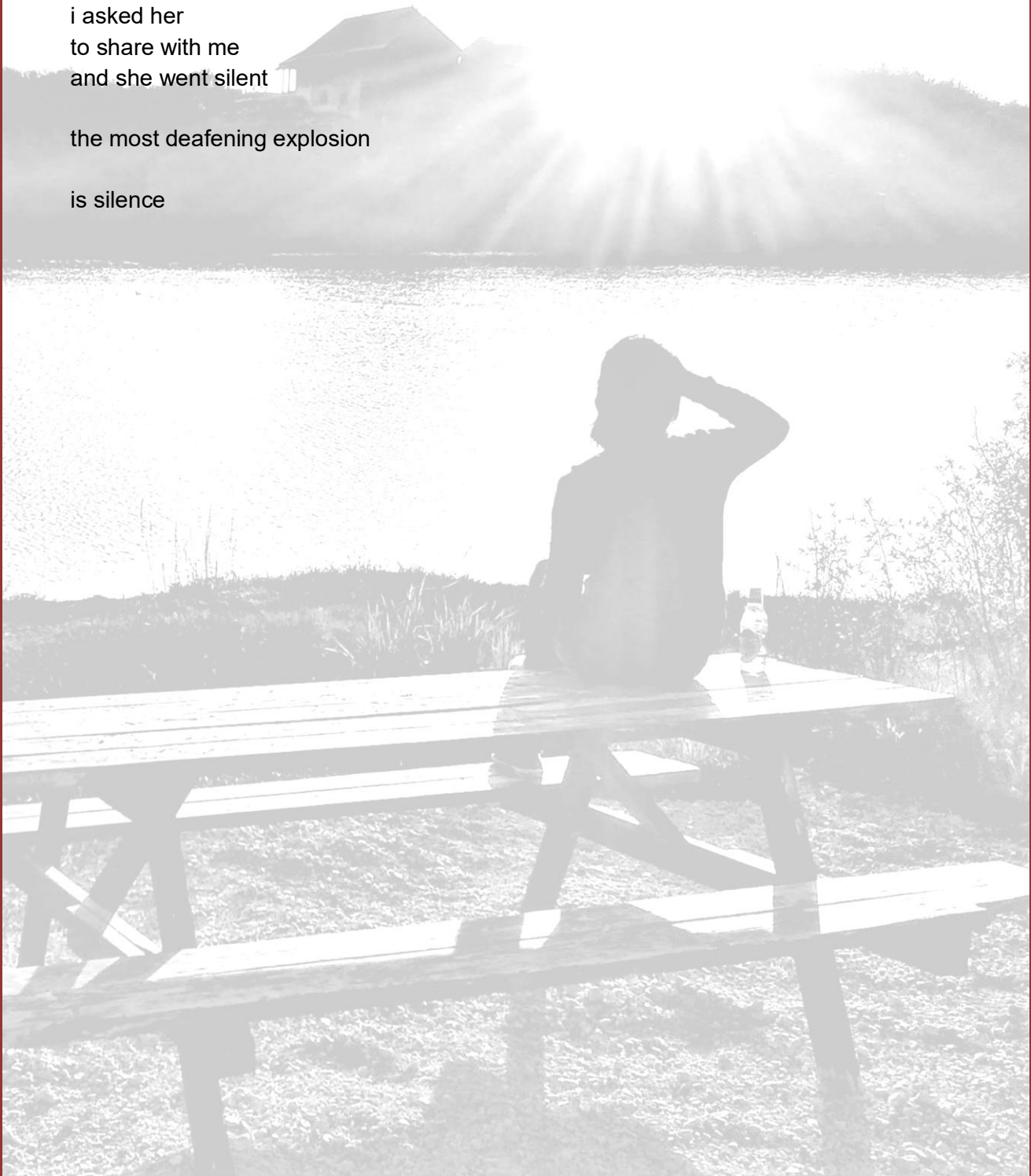


20231027.2 | silent reply

i asked her  
to share with me  
and she went silent

the most deafening explosion

is silence





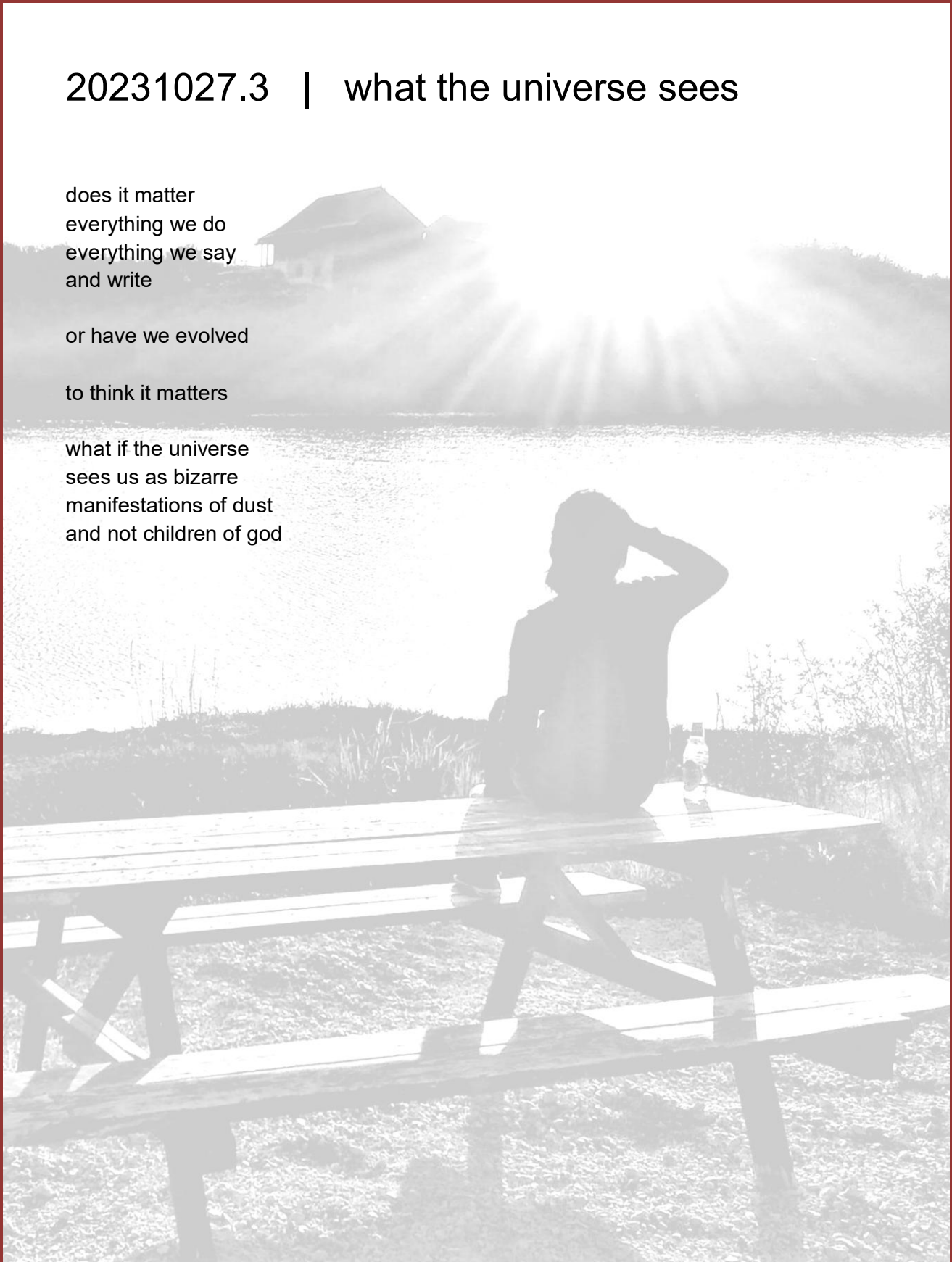
## 20231027.3 | what the universe sees

does it matter  
everything we do  
everything we say  
and write

or have we evolved

to think it matters

what if the universe  
sees us as bizarre  
manifestations of dust  
and not children of god



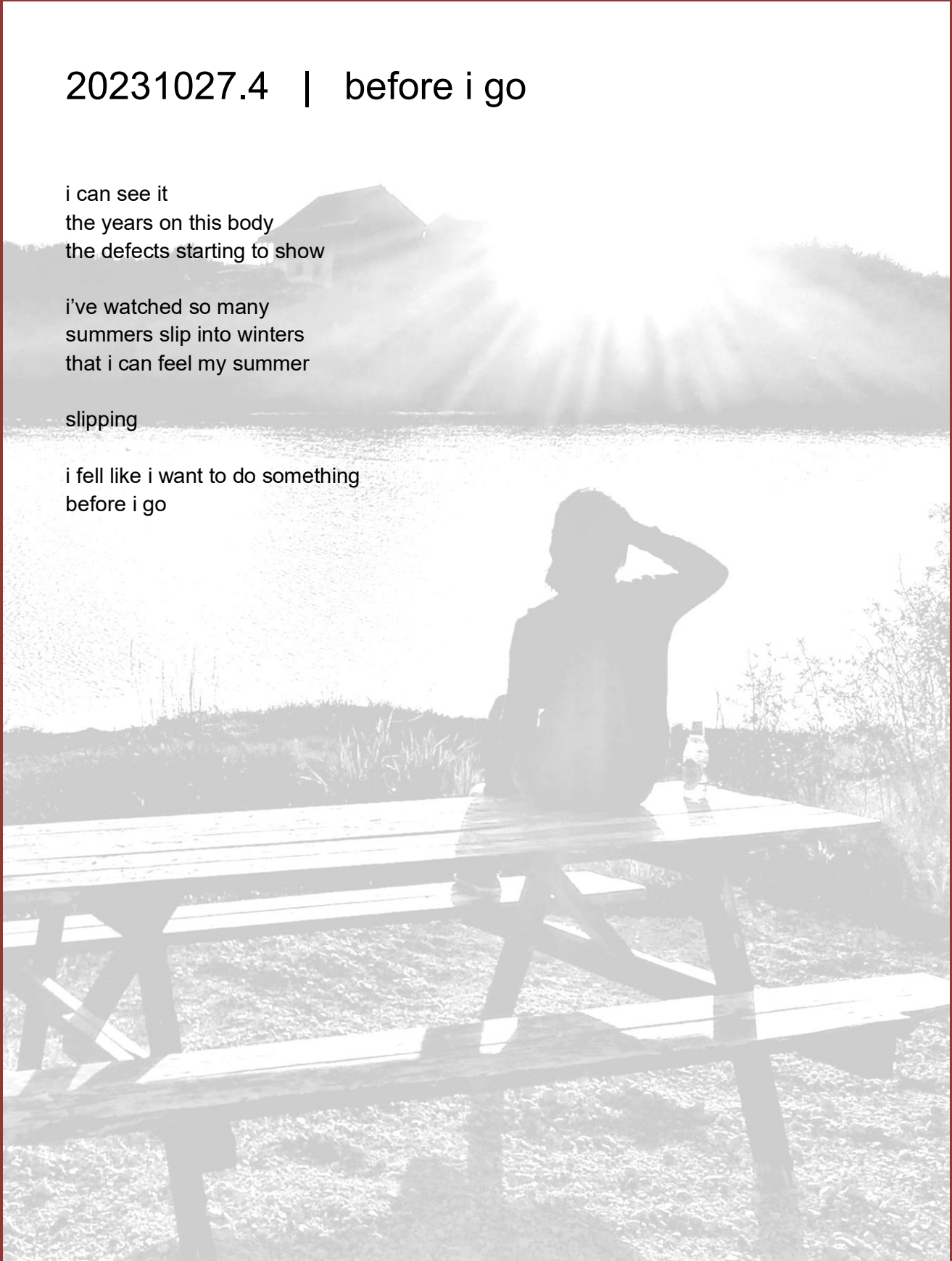
20231027.4 | before i go

i can see it  
the years on this body  
the defects starting to show

i've watched so many  
summers slip into winters  
that i can feel my summer

slipping

i fell like i want to do something  
before i go



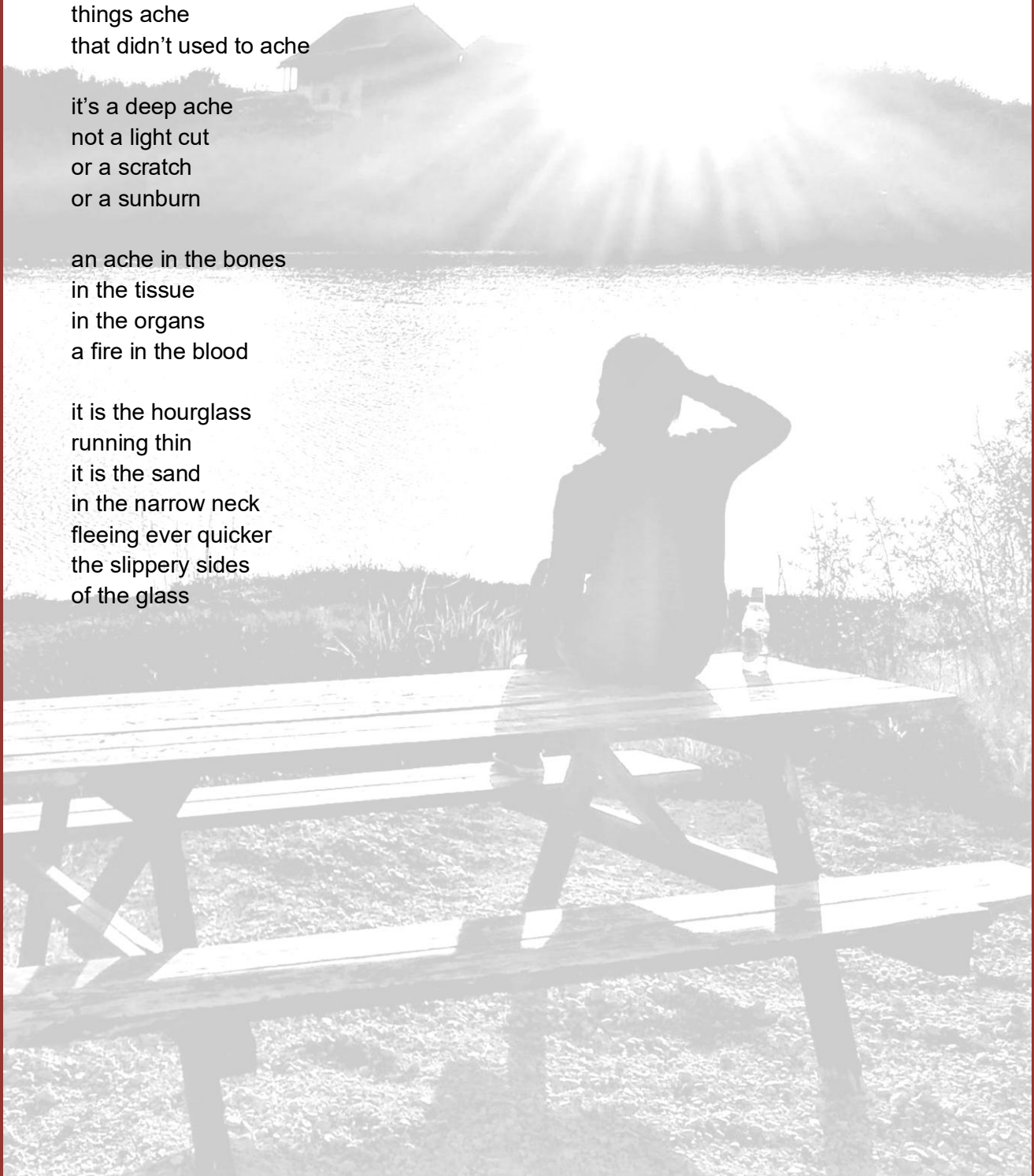
## 20231105.1 | slippery sides of the glass

things ache  
that didn't used to ache

it's a deep ache  
not a light cut  
or a scratch  
or a sunburn

an ache in the bones  
in the tissue  
in the organs  
a fire in the blood

it is the hourglass  
running thin  
it is the sand  
in the narrow neck  
fleeing ever quicker  
the slippery sides  
of the glass





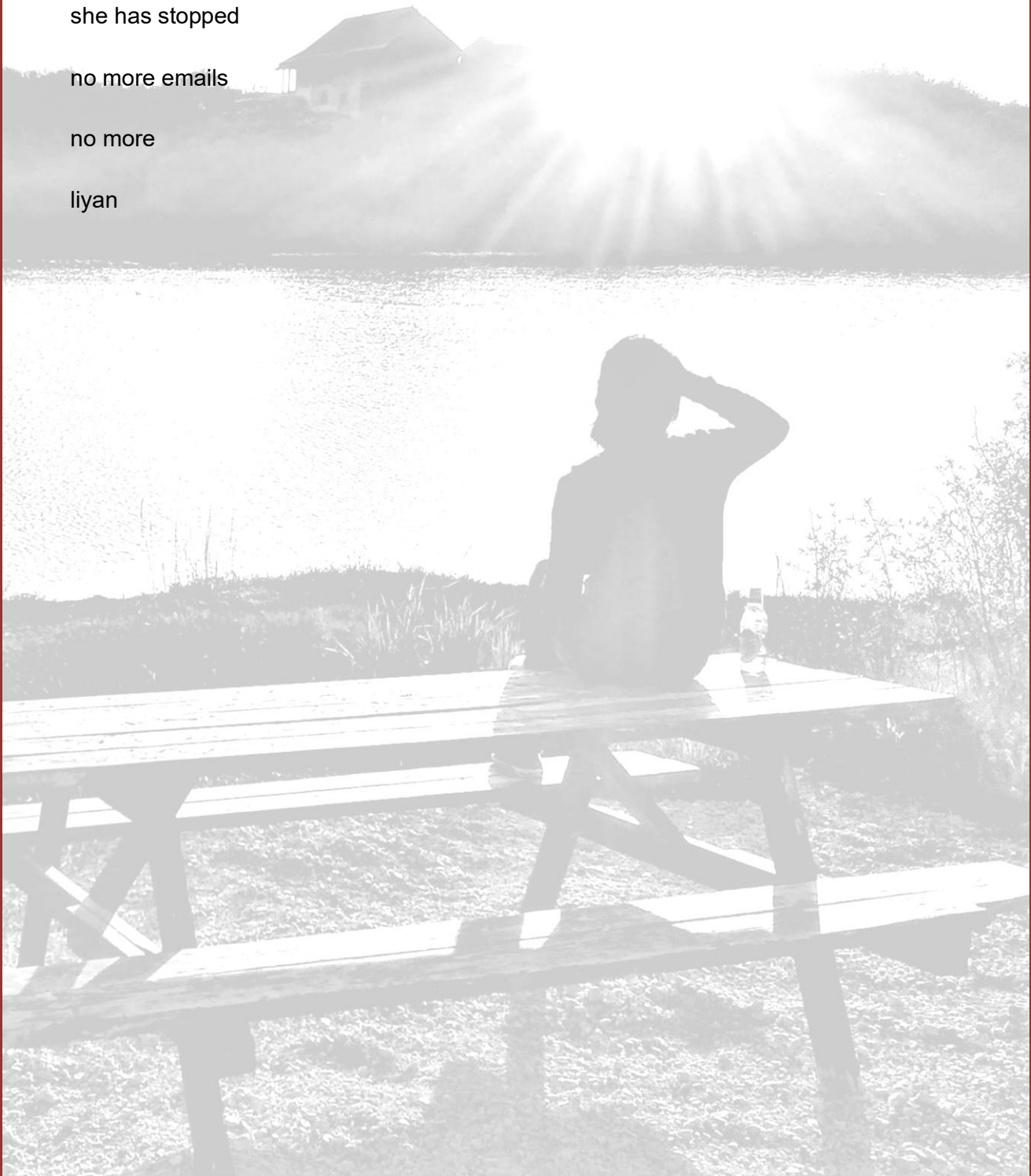
20231105.2 | never more

she has stopped

no more emails

no more

liyan



## 20231105.3 | wax figure

i have met a half dozen  
nice women  
on dating sites  
in america  
in utah

i have met a hundred  
nice women  
on dating sites  
in asia

women saying hello  
warm and willing  
hoping

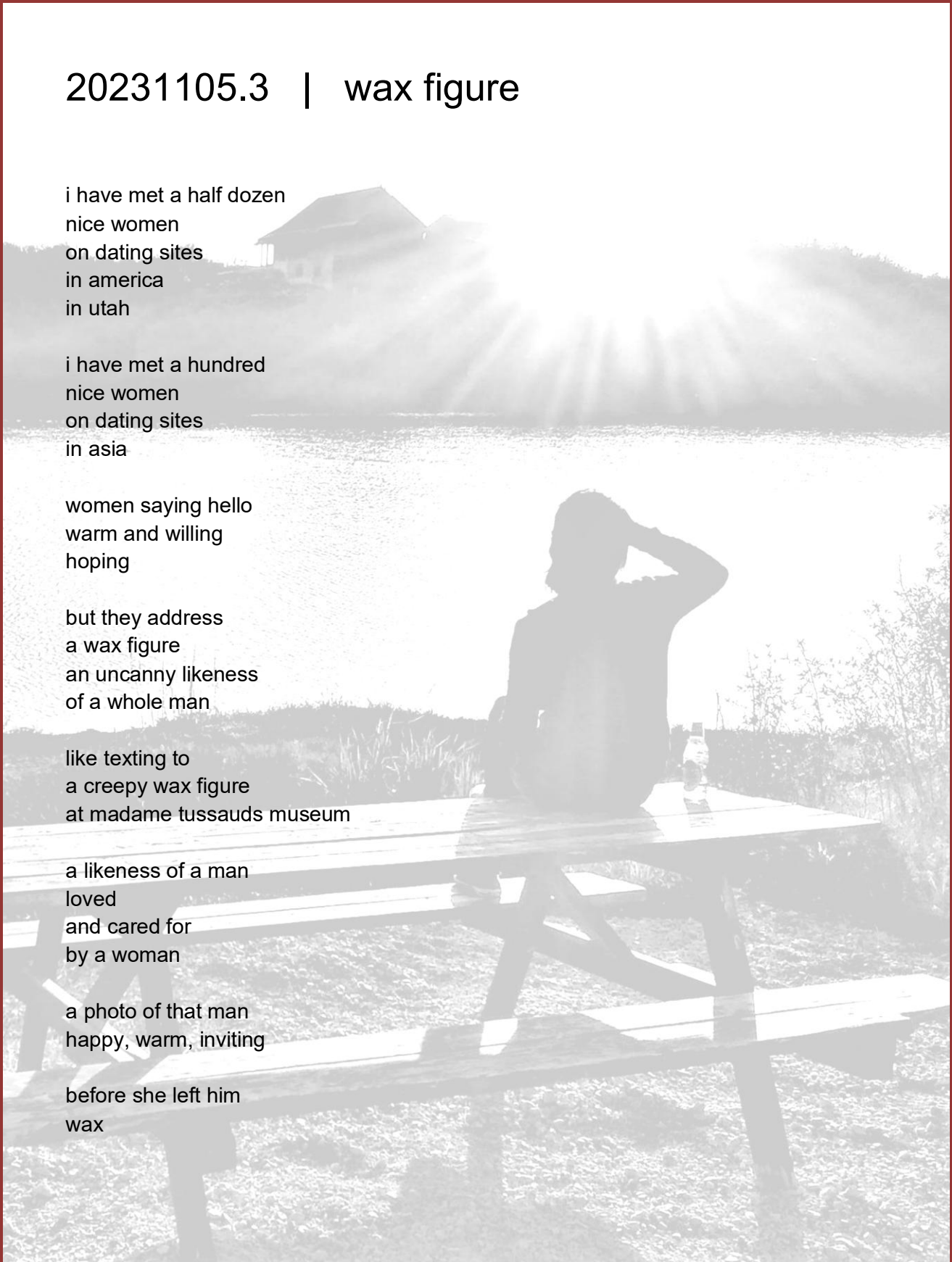
but they address  
a wax figure  
an uncanny likeness  
of a whole man

like texting to  
a creepy wax figure  
at madame tussauds museum

a likeness of a man  
loved  
and cared for  
by a woman

a photo of that man  
happy, warm, inviting

before she left him  
wax



## 20231105.4 | god in the void

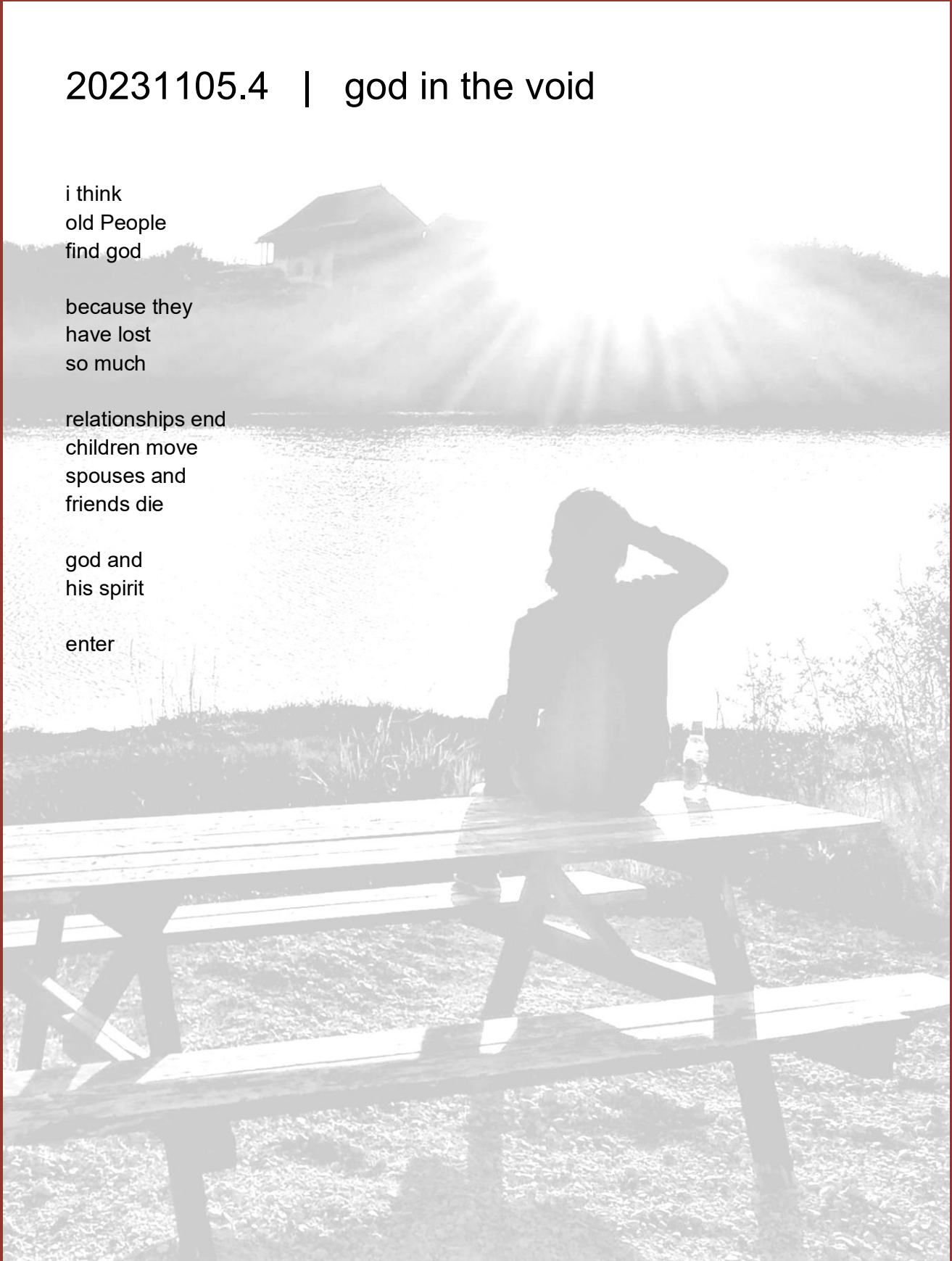
i think  
old People  
find god

because they  
have lost  
so much

relationships end  
children move  
spouses and  
friends die

god and  
his spirit

enter





## 20231111.1 | burying the past

i need a funeral  
a day  
dedicated for goodbye

i need to put it on the calendar  
dread its arrival  
announce it  
make it public

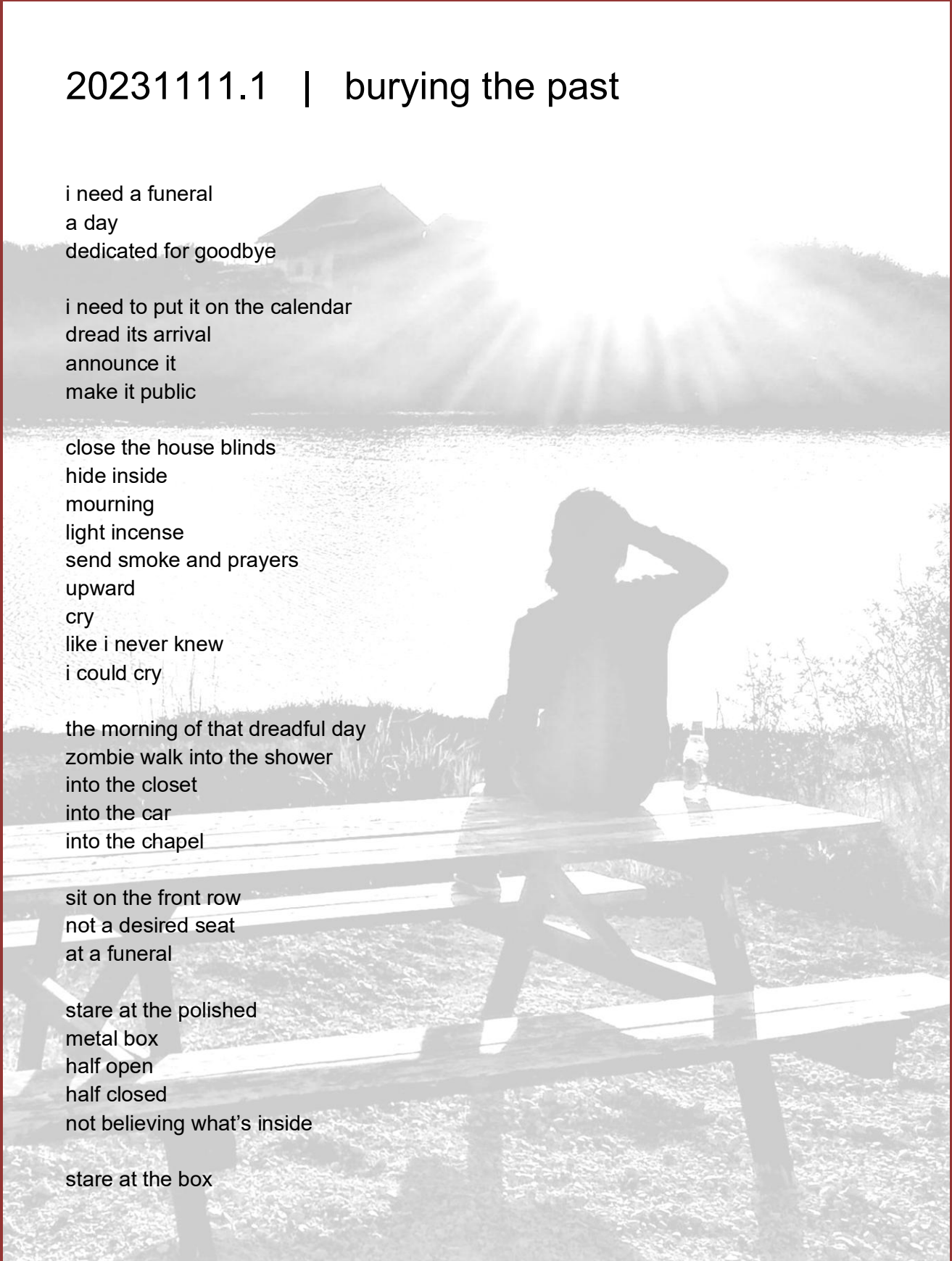
close the house blinds  
hide inside  
mourning  
light incense  
send smoke and prayers  
upward  
cry  
like i never knew  
i could cry

the morning of that dreadful day  
zombie walk into the shower  
into the closet  
into the car  
into the chapel

sit on the front row  
not a desired seat  
at a funeral

stare at the polished  
metal box  
half open  
half closed  
not believing what's inside

stare at the box



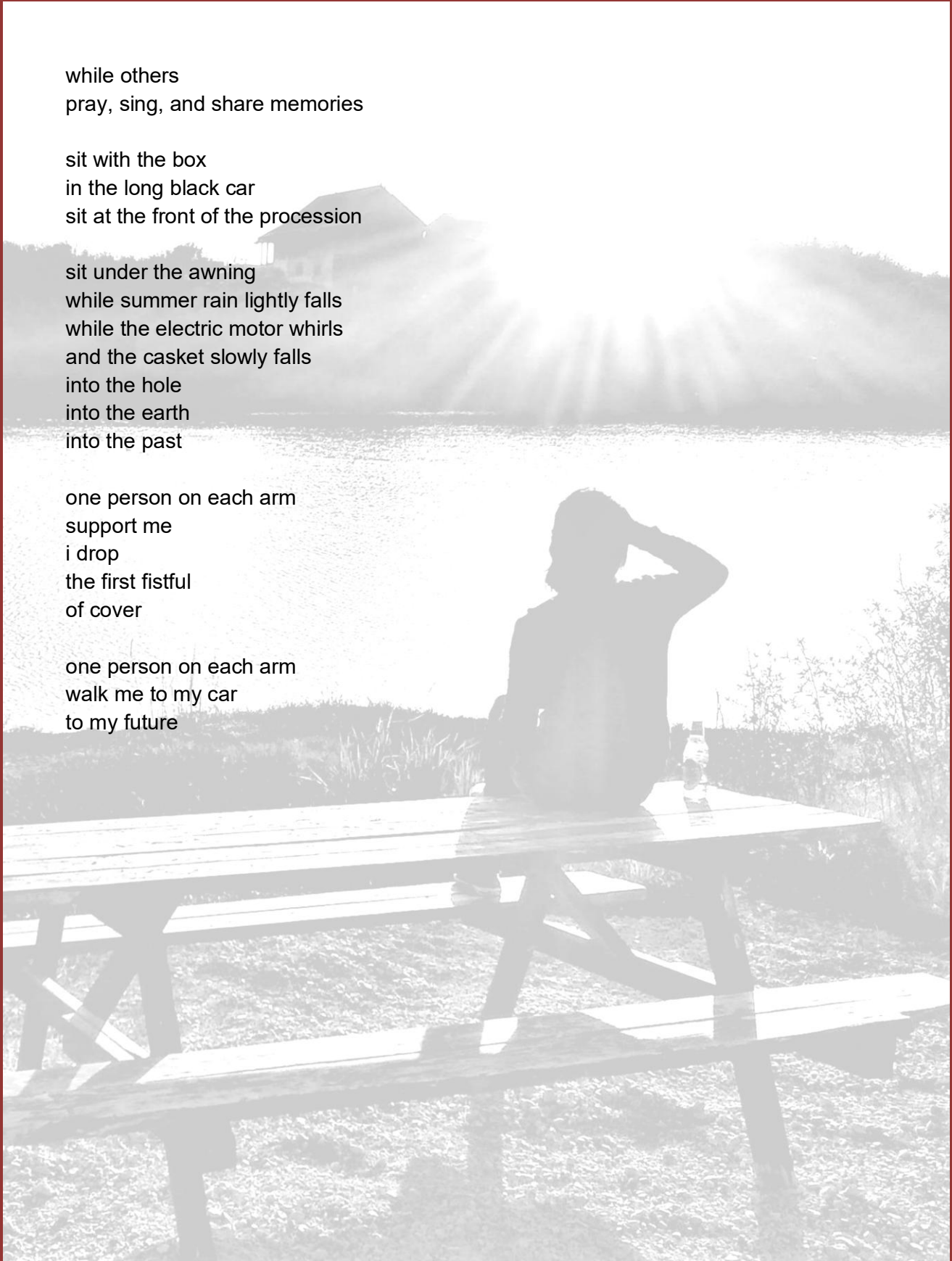
while others  
pray, sing, and share memories

sit with the box  
in the long black car  
sit at the front of the procession

sit under the awning  
while summer rain lightly falls  
while the electric motor whirls  
and the casket slowly falls  
into the hole  
into the earth  
into the past

one person on each arm  
support me  
i drop  
the first fistful  
of cover

one person on each arm  
walk me to my car  
to my future



## 20231111.2 | a magical turn

people believe  
because we want  
a magical  
turn  
in our favor

we want  
a pleasant  
surprise

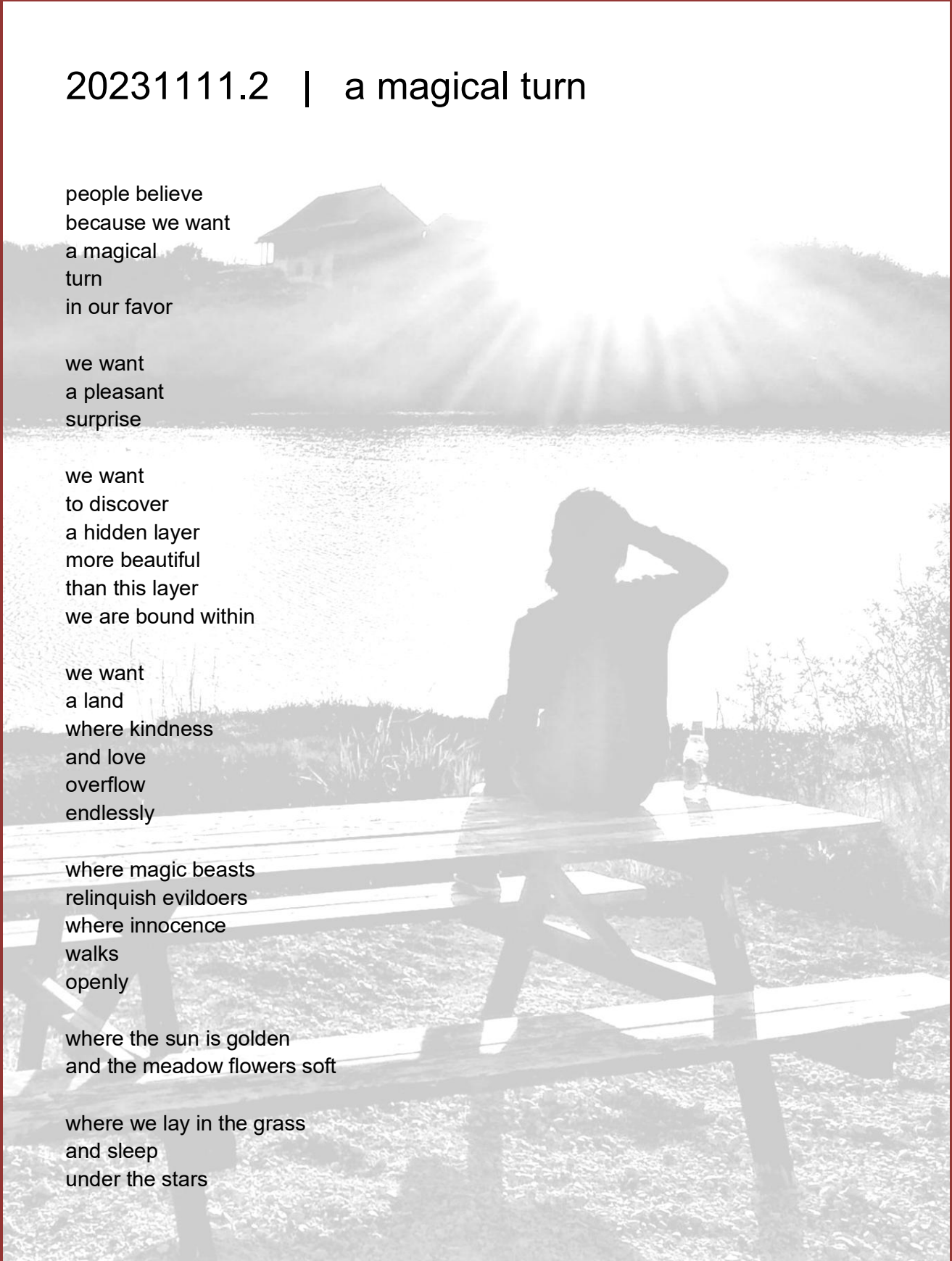
we want  
to discover  
a hidden layer  
more beautiful  
than this layer  
we are bound within

we want  
a land  
where kindness  
and love  
overflow  
endlessly

where magic beasts  
relinquish evildoers  
where innocence  
walks  
openly

where the sun is golden  
and the meadow flowers soft

where we lay in the grass  
and sleep  
under the stars

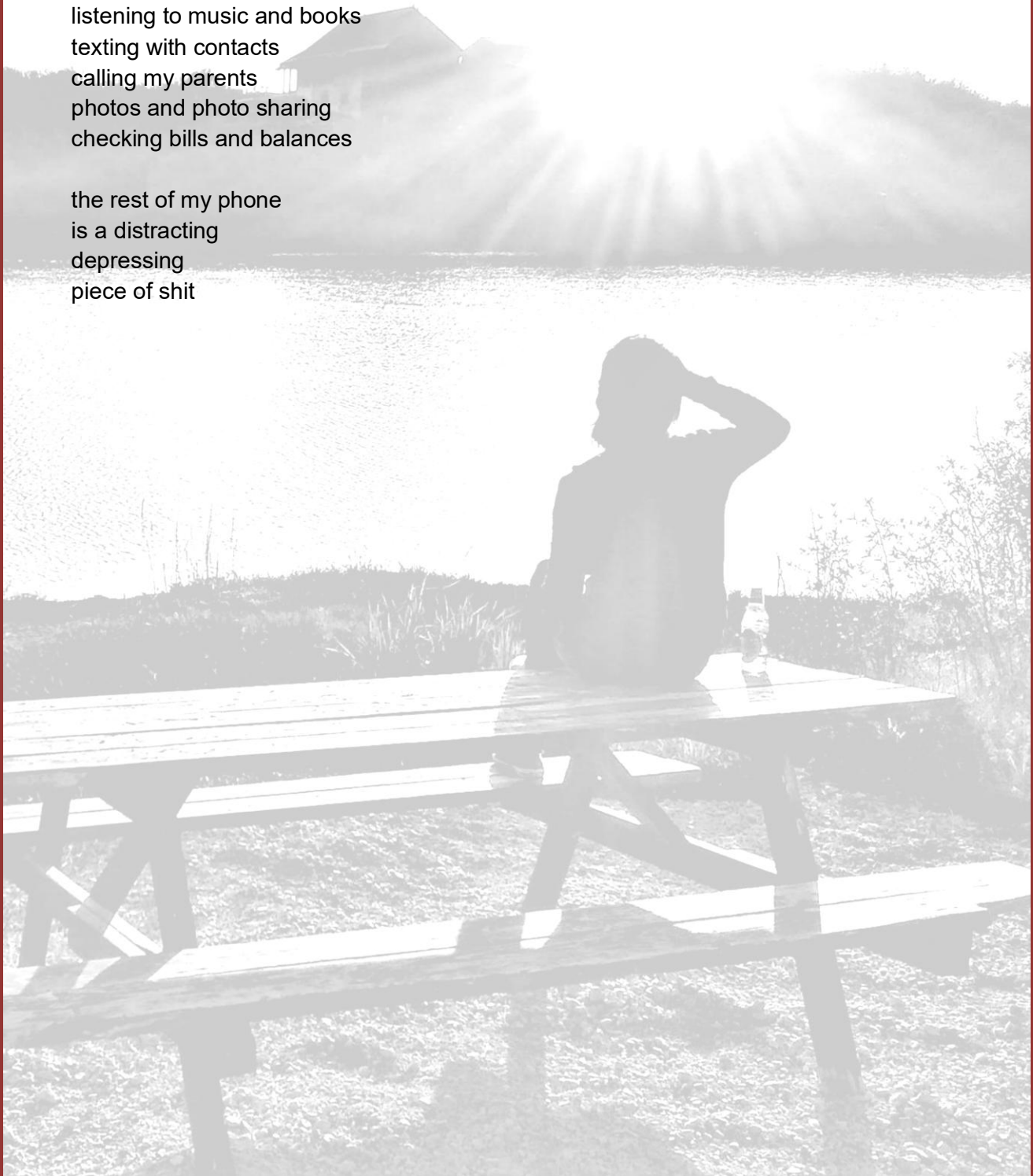




## 20231111.3 | cell phone

listening to music and books  
texting with contacts  
calling my parents  
photos and photo sharing  
checking bills and balances

the rest of my phone  
is a distracting  
depressing  
piece of shit

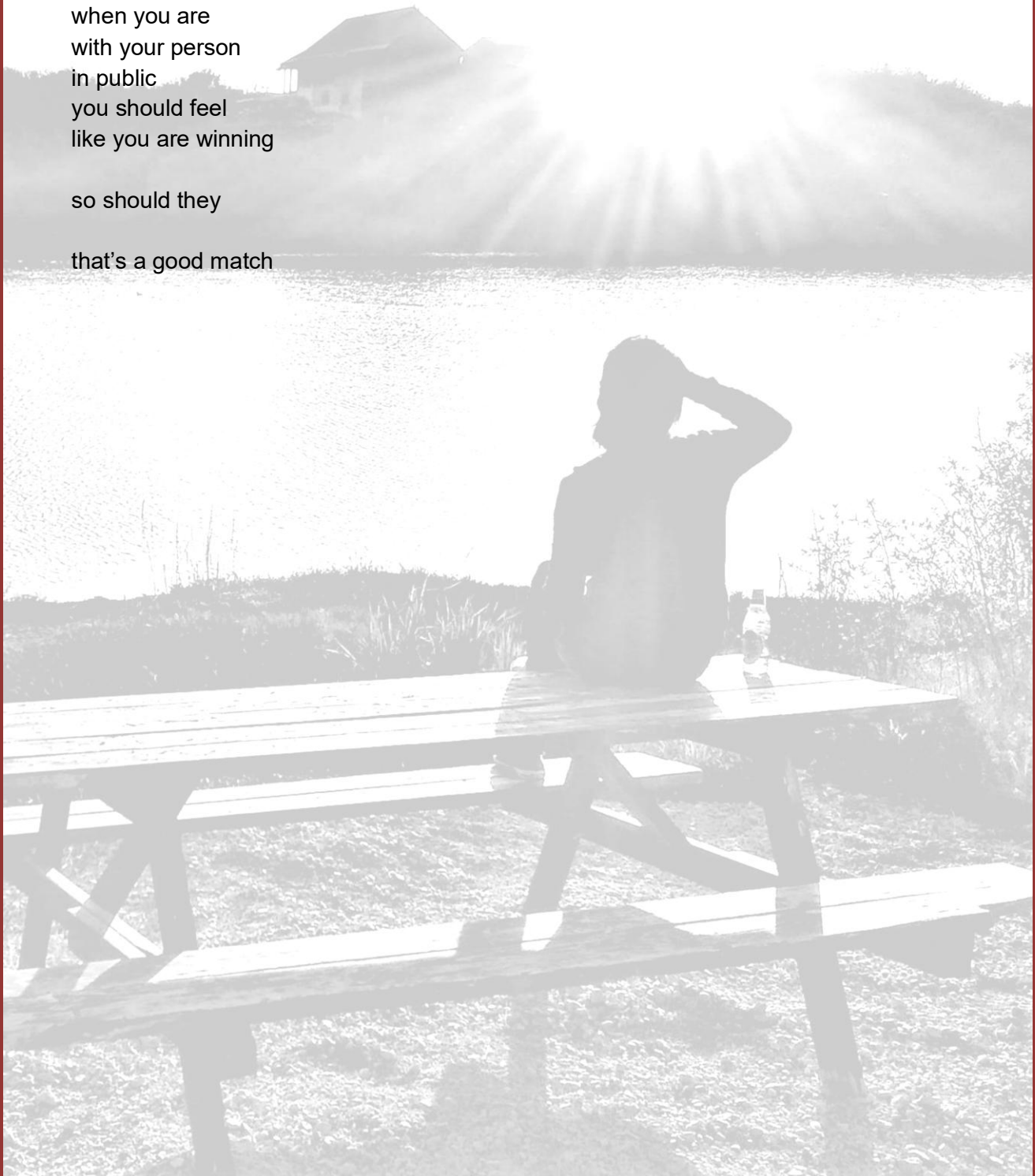


20231111.4 | good match

when you are  
with your person  
in public  
you should feel  
like you are winning

so should they

that's a good match



## 20231111.5 | as we sank

love

lore

soar

sore

more

moor

\*\*\*

a warm feeling

a fake story

to fly free

to hurt deeply

adding to life

a boggy swamp

\*\*\*

she walked back from the bathroom  
in the dark  
climbed into bed  
pushing her front to my back  
her arm and cold hand pressed  
against my warm chest



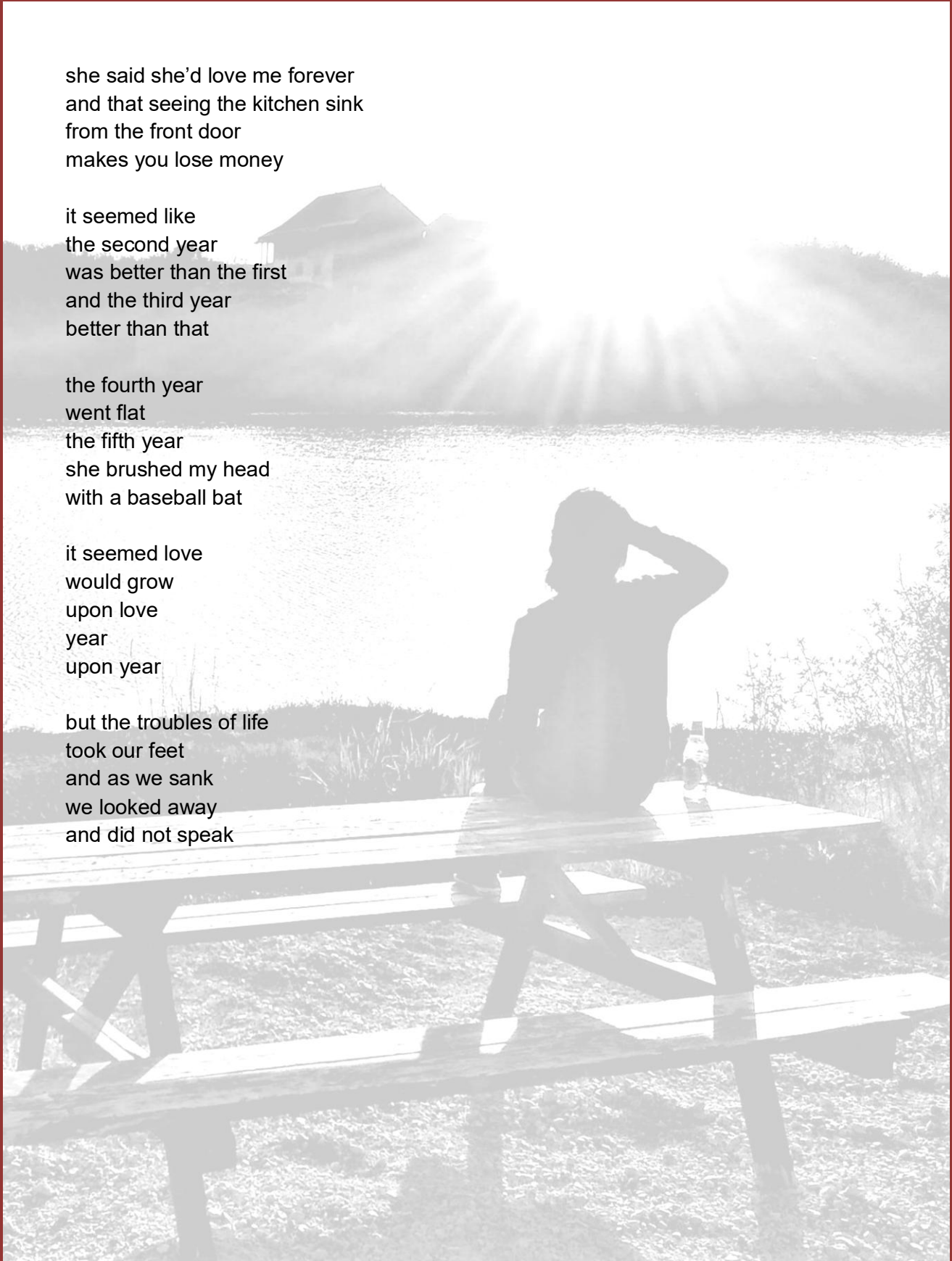
she said she'd love me forever  
and that seeing the kitchen sink  
from the front door  
makes you lose money

it seemed like  
the second year  
was better than the first  
and the third year  
better than that

the fourth year  
went flat  
the fifth year  
she brushed my head  
with a baseball bat

it seemed love  
would grow  
upon love  
year  
upon year

but the troubles of life  
took our feet  
and as we sank  
we looked away  
and did not speak



## 20231116.1 | love transforms

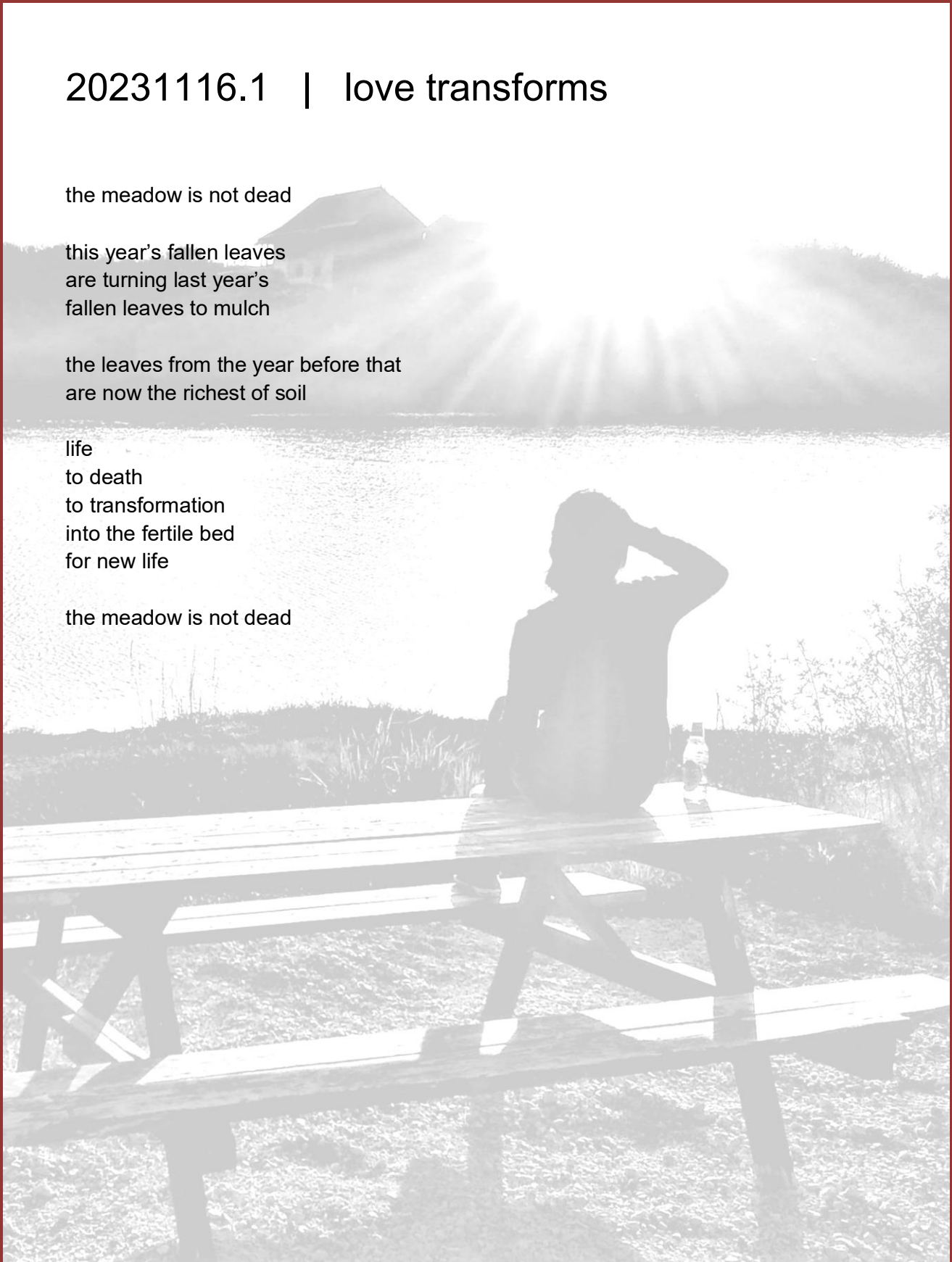
the meadow is not dead

this year's fallen leaves  
are turning last year's  
fallen leaves to mulch

the leaves from the year before that  
are now the richest of soil

life  
to death  
to transformation  
into the fertile bed  
for new life

the meadow is not dead



## 20231118.1 | delusional projection

gald i  
did not  
know

the way it  
all would  
go

the curtain call  
the ending of  
the show

or is it  
the ending of  
act one

will our story  
go  
on

will we  
keep  
holding on

will we raise our voice  
and sing  
our song

will we make  
our story  
life long

Will we raise our voice  
will we  
sing our song



## 20231122.1 | into the darkness

we call into the darkness  
the darkness is void  
no reply  
not even an echo

we reach into the darkness  
and we reach  
and reach  
and never touch a thing

but then

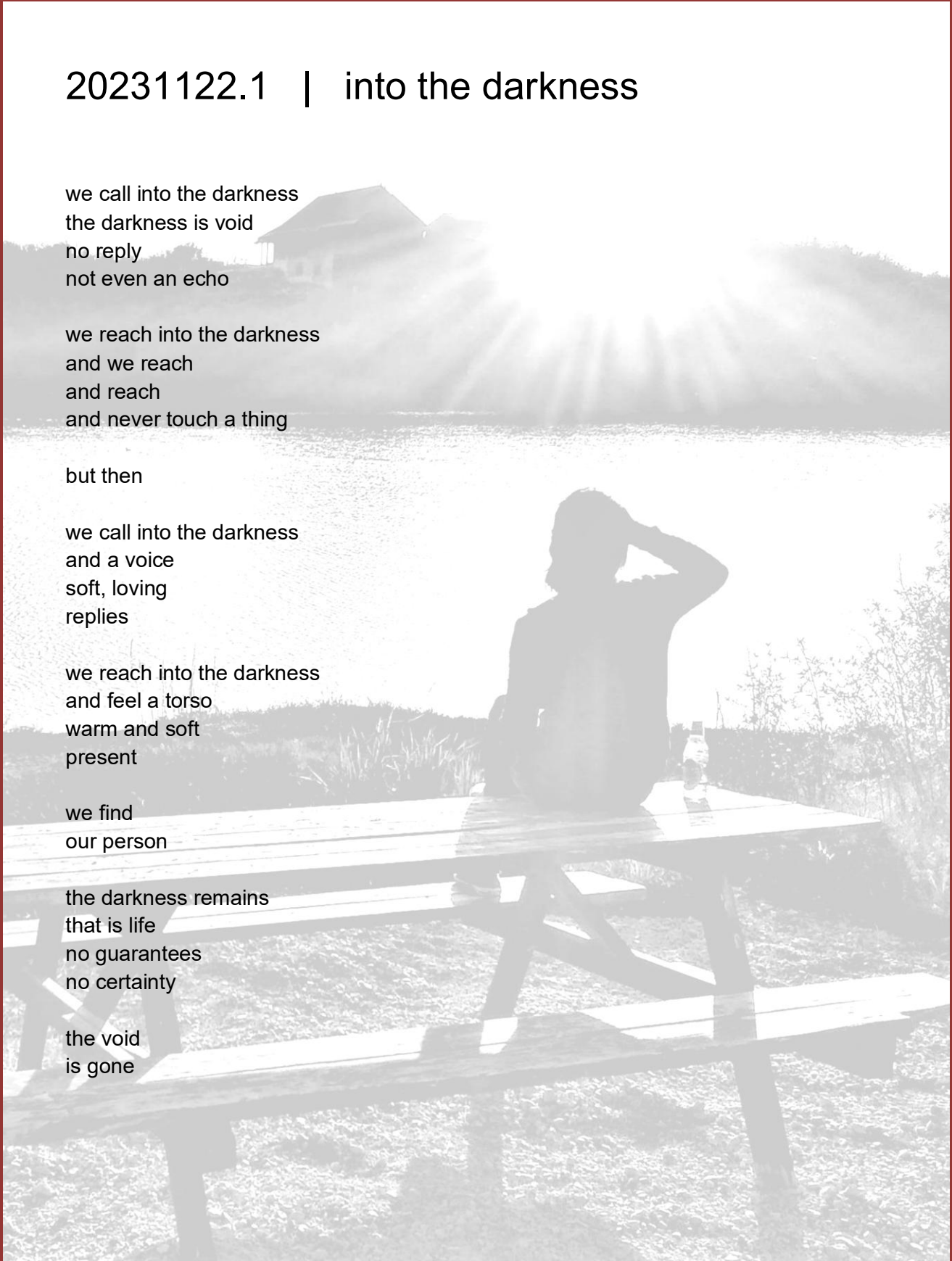
we call into the darkness  
and a voice  
soft, loving  
replies

we reach into the darkness  
and feel a torso  
warm and soft  
present

we find  
our person

the darkness remains  
that is life  
no guarantees  
no certainty

the void  
is gone

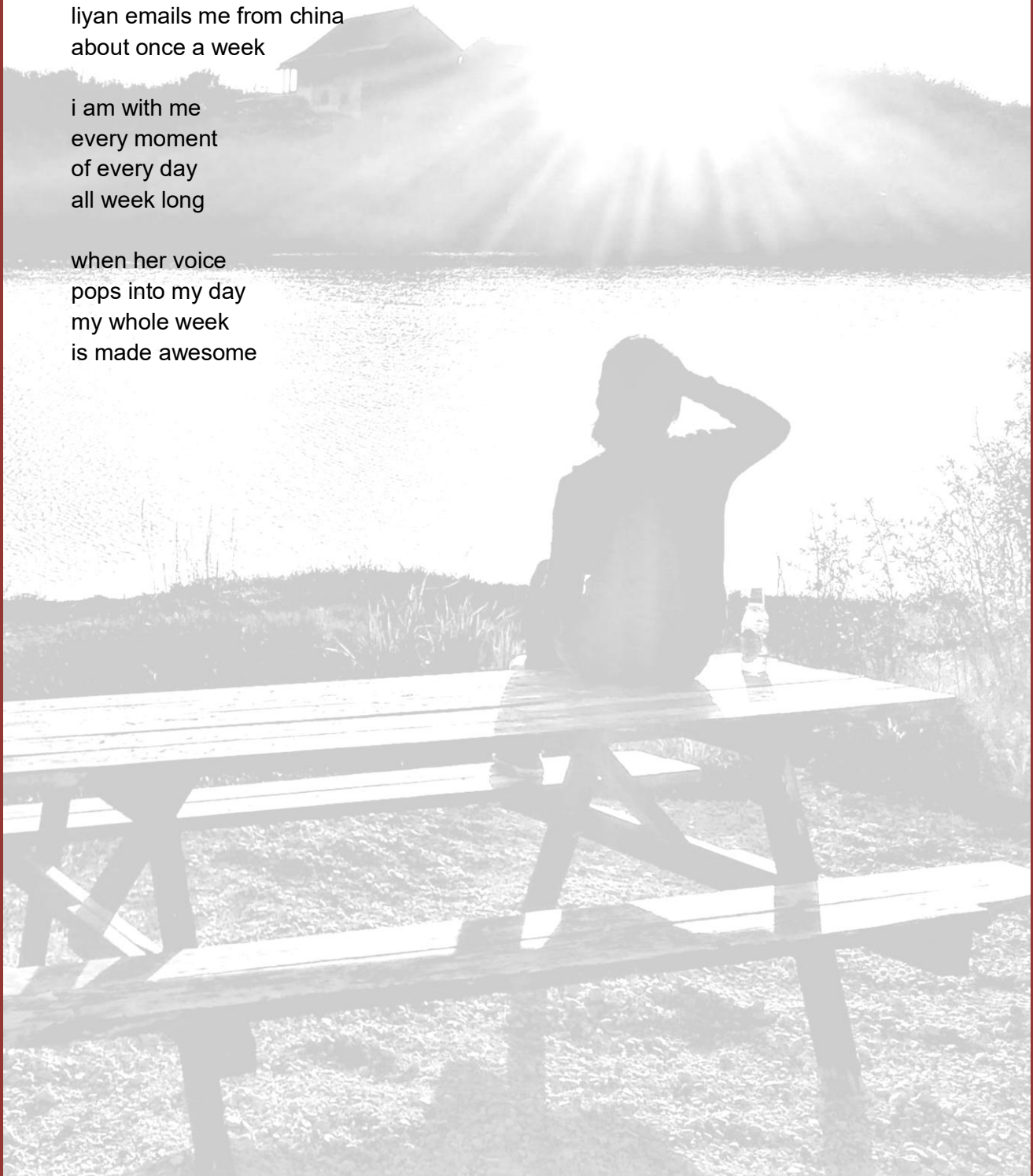


## 20231122.2 | a moment of sunlight

liyan emails me from china  
about once a week

i am with me  
every moment  
of every day  
all week long

when her voice  
pops into my day  
my whole week  
is made awesome



## 20231122.3 | a shadow made of light

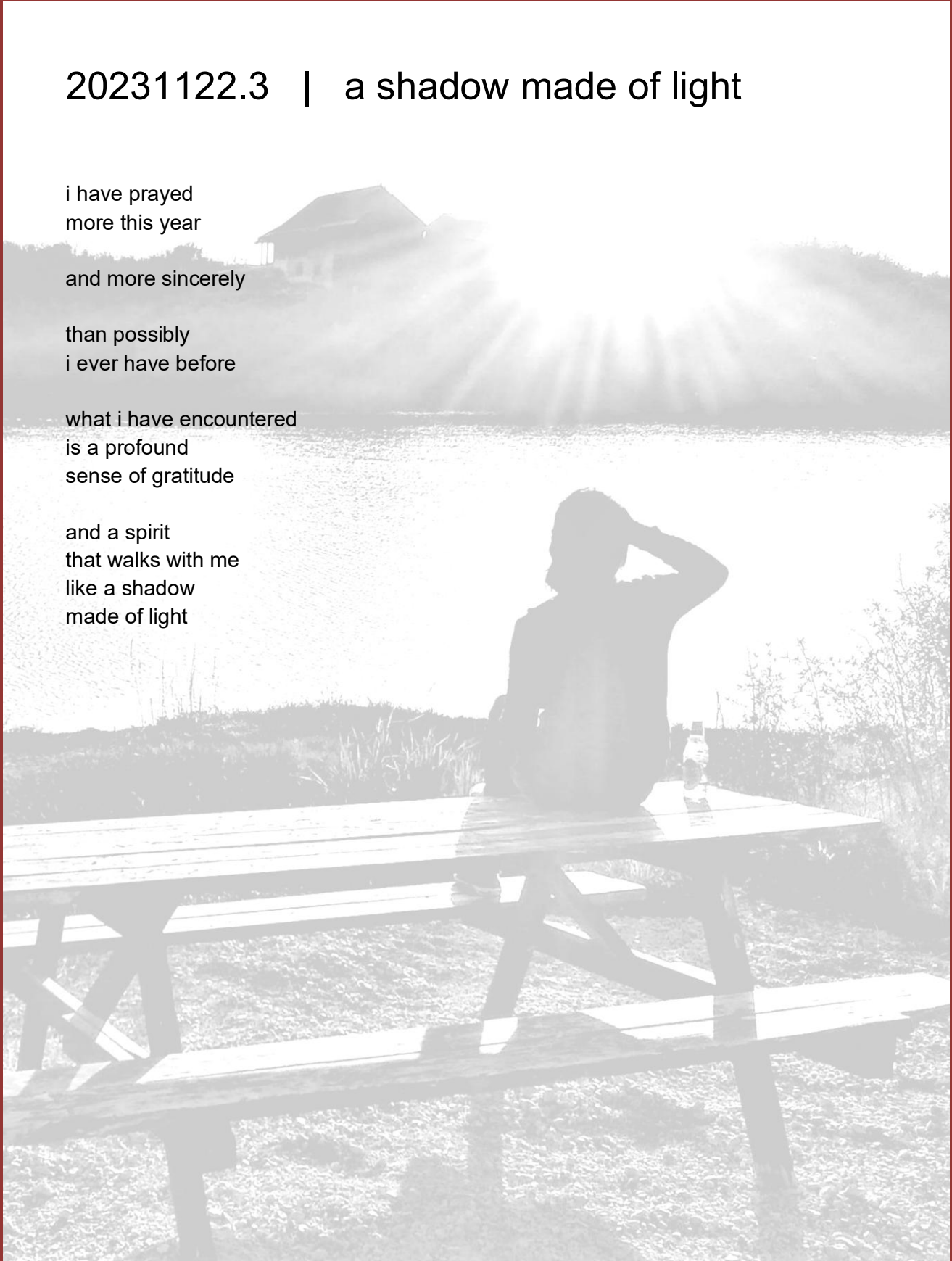
i have prayed  
more this year

and more sincerely

than possibly  
i ever have before

what i have encountered  
is a profound  
sense of gratitude

and a spirit  
that walks with me  
like a shadow  
made of light





## 20231123.1 | love or eat

151 jobs applied for  
137 companies covered

1 company  
1 job

said yes

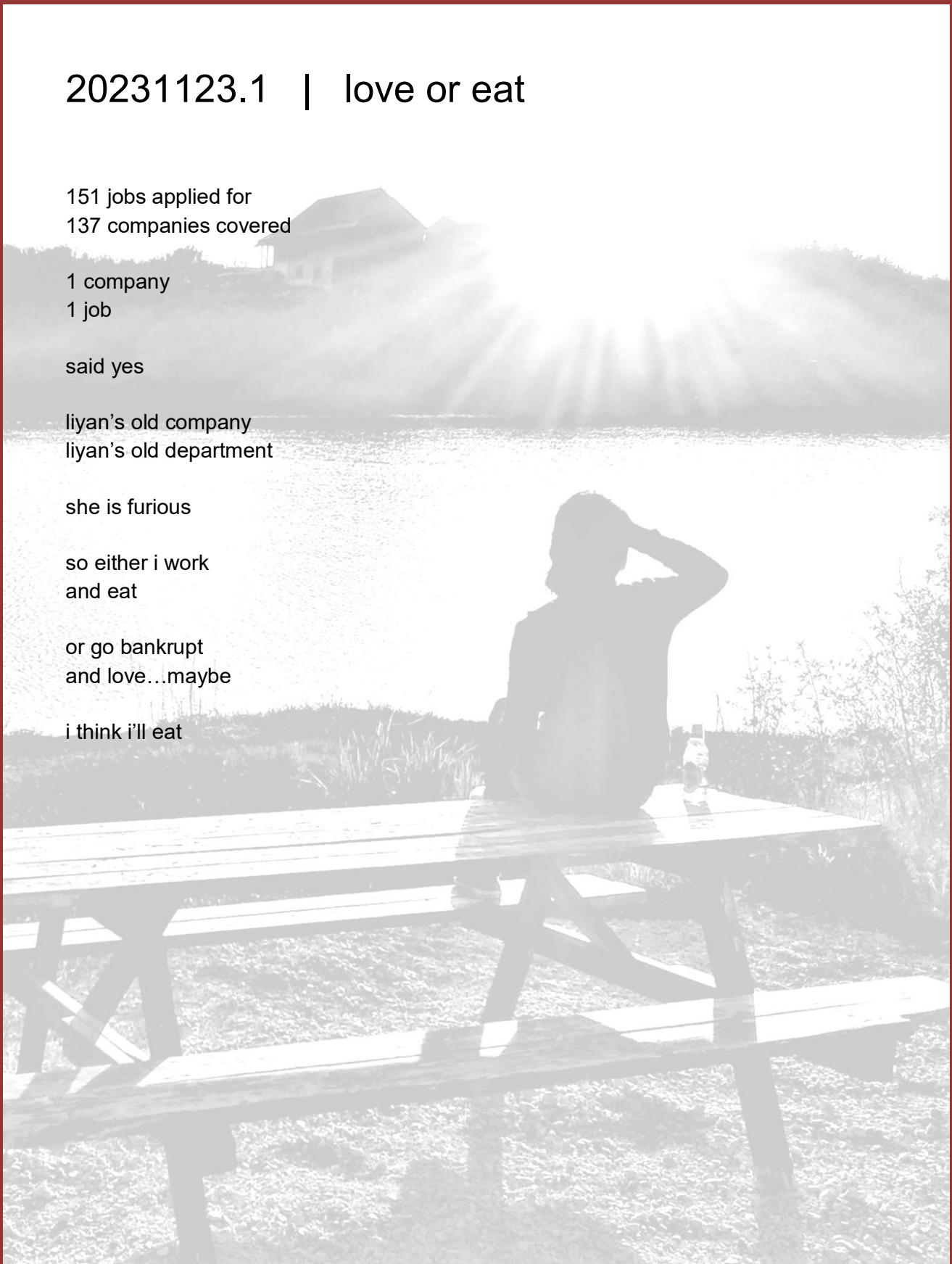
liyan's old company  
liyan's old department

she is furious

so either i work  
and eat

or go bankrupt  
and love...maybe

i think i'll eat



## 20231208.1 | end of day

pack your bags  
make it quick

start your  
love-end trip

close the door  
close your heart

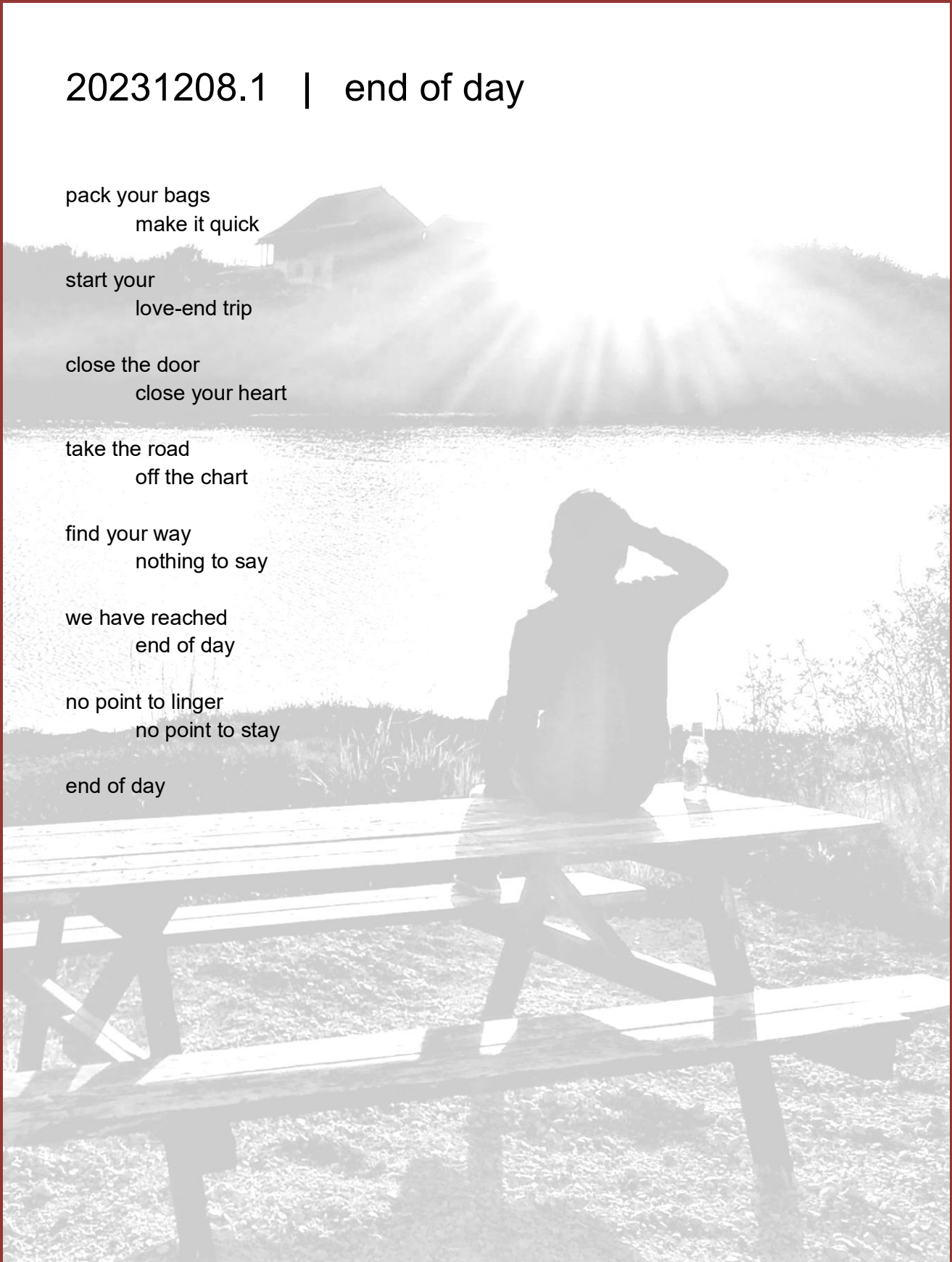
take the road  
off the chart

find your way  
nothing to say

we have reached  
end of day

no point to linger  
no point to stay

end of day



## 20231208.2 | spirits that follow you

spirits  
that linger  
with you

have  
moved  
away

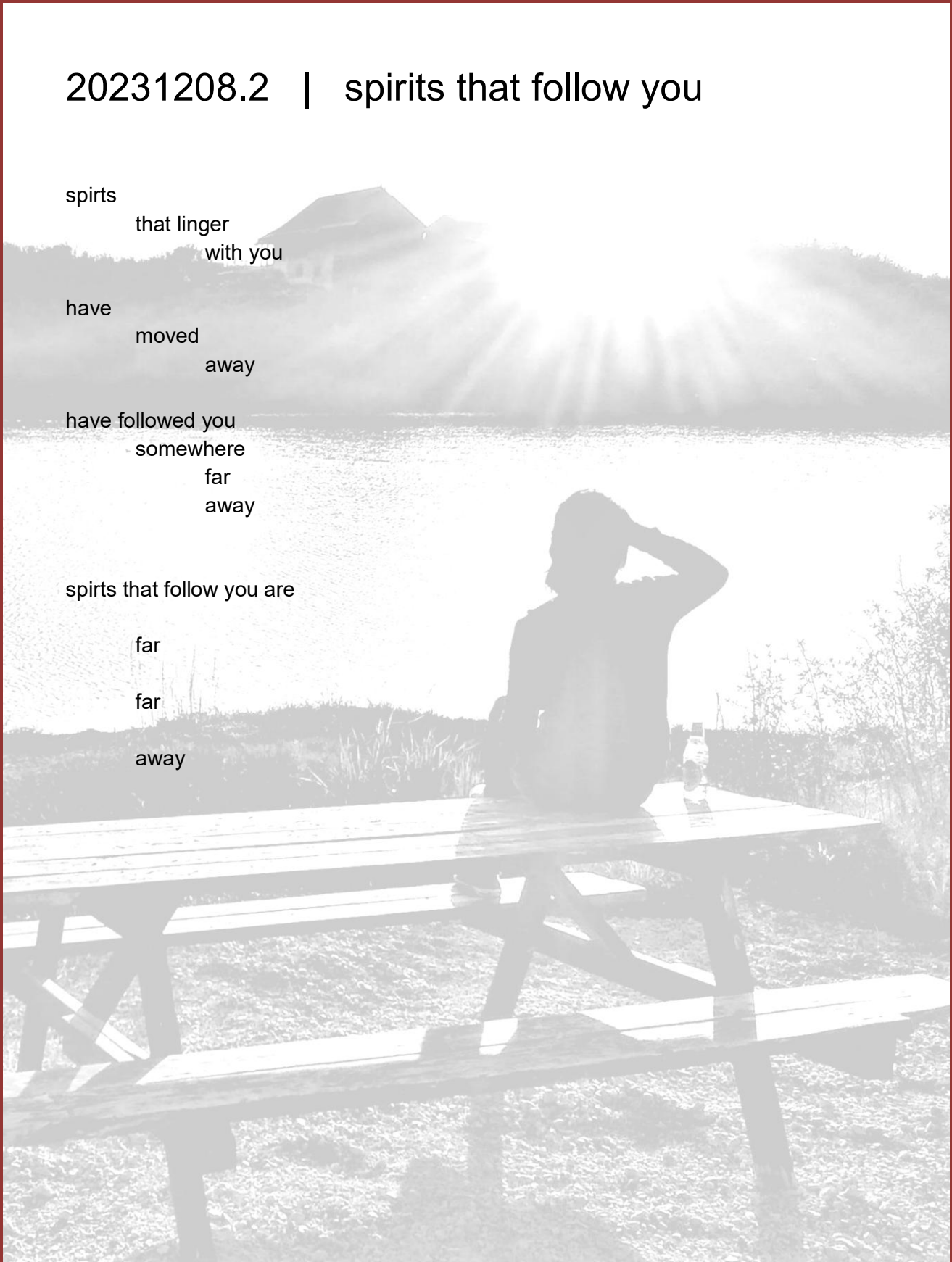
have followed you  
somewhere  
far  
away

spirits that follow you are

far

far

away





## 20231208.3 | the small bedside table

the small table  
by the bed  
holds a lamp  
my book  
my glasses

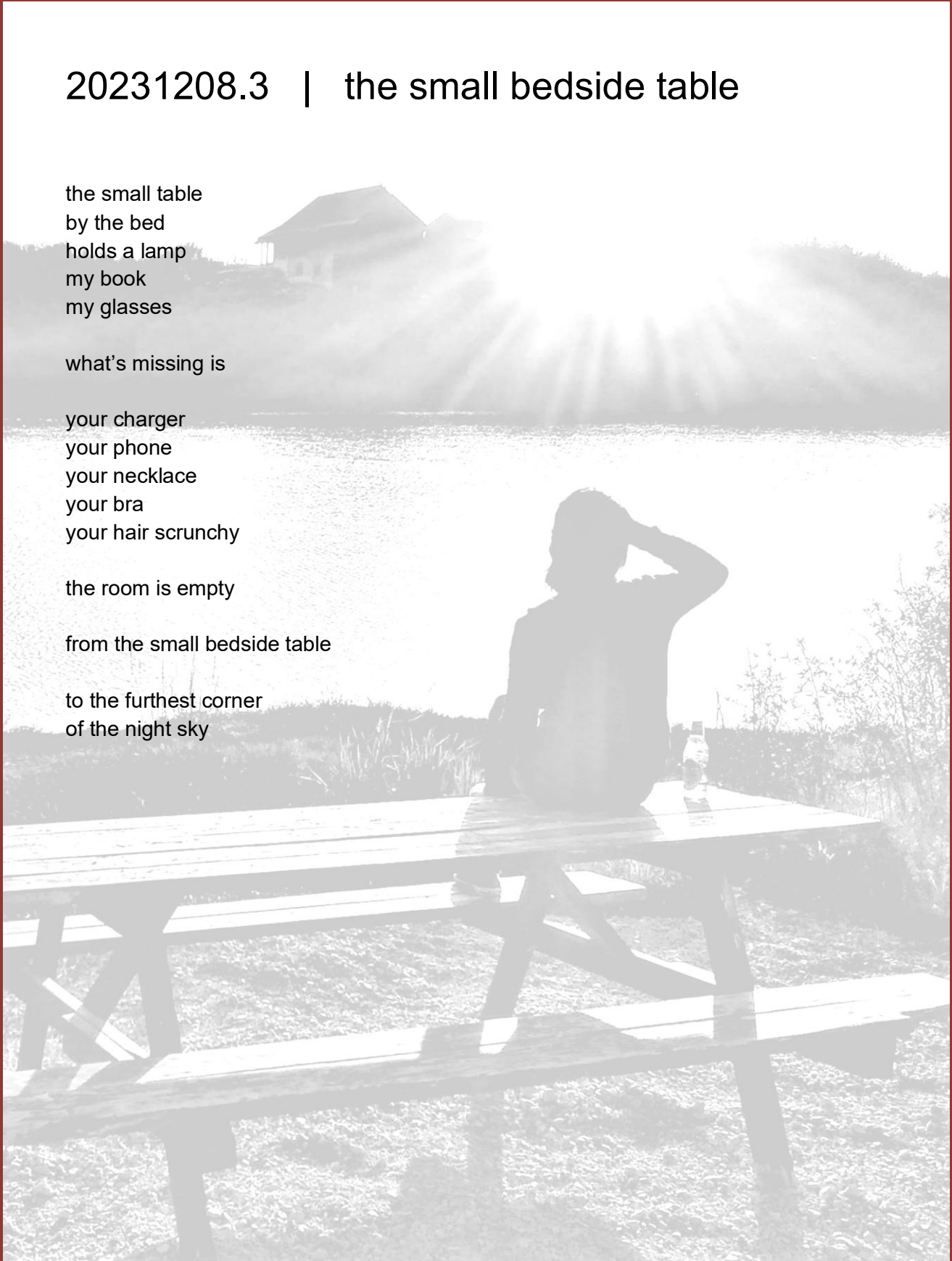
what's missing is

your charger  
your phone  
your necklace  
your bra  
your hair scrunchy

the room is empty

from the small bedside table

to the furthest corner  
of the night sky



20231208.4 | what stays

time

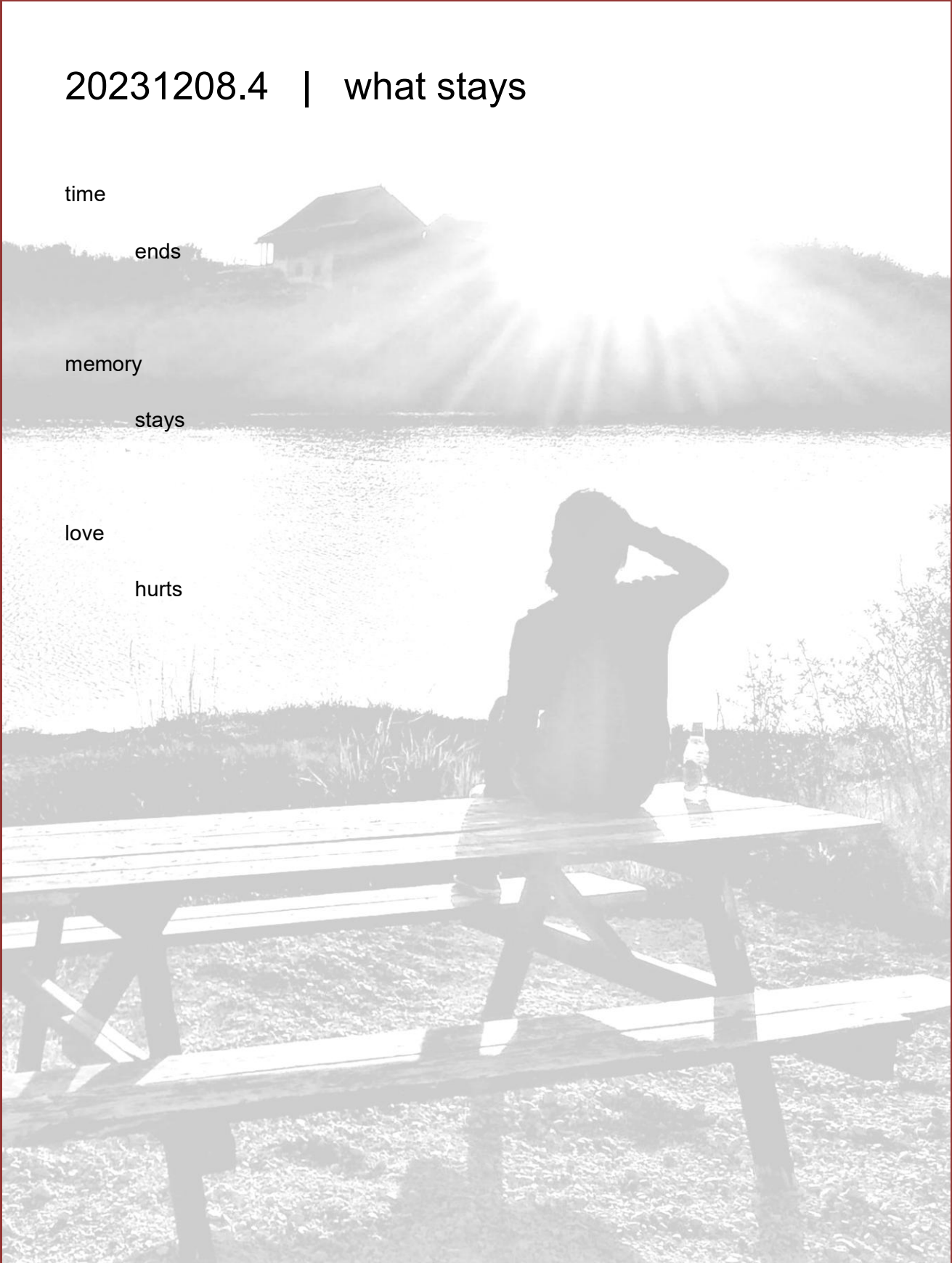
ends

memory

stays

love

hurts



## 20231216.1 | yang to yin

we met online  
you smiled  
we decided  
to share our time

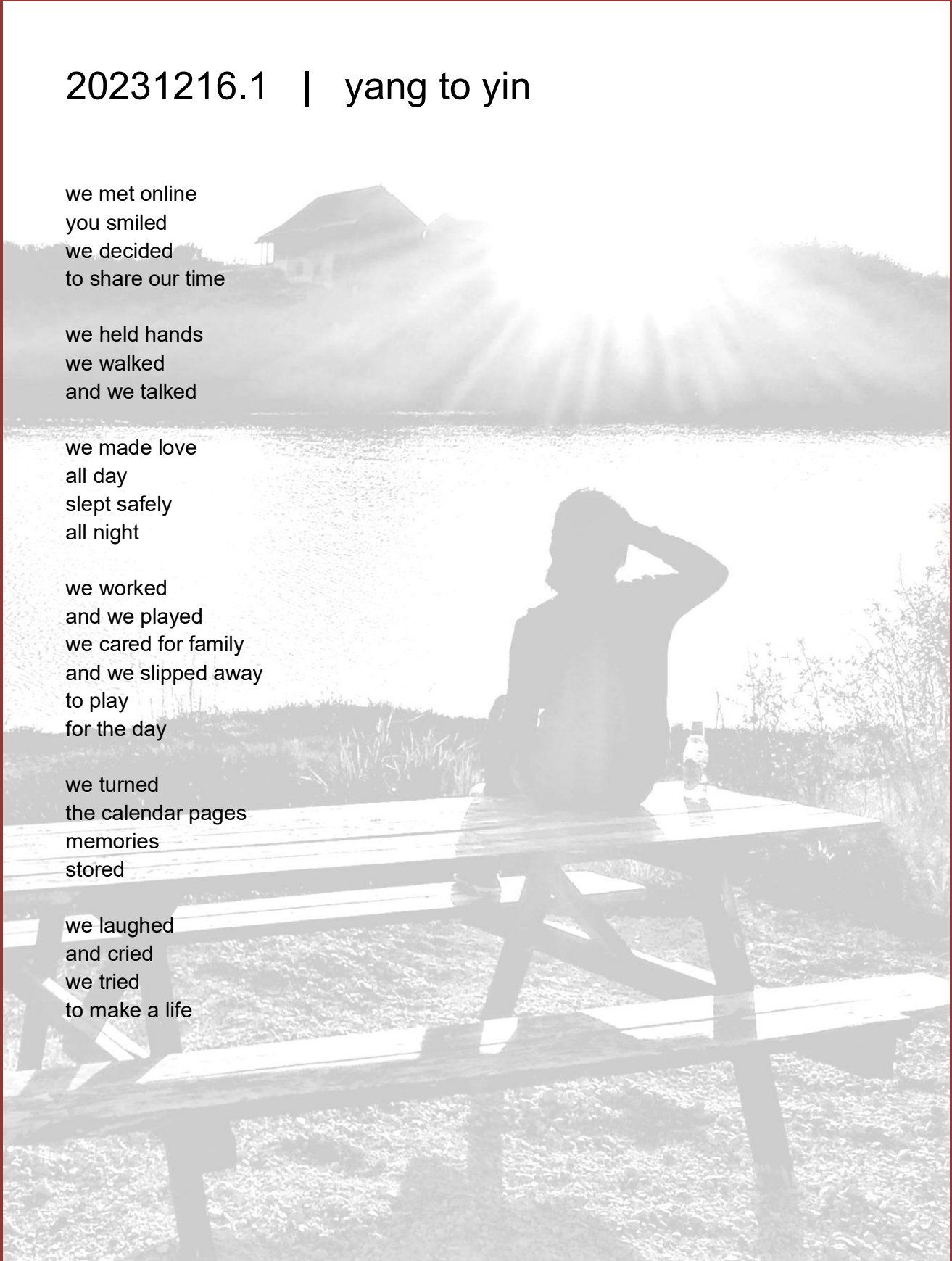
we held hands  
we walked  
and we talked

we made love  
all day  
slept safely  
all night

we worked  
and we played  
we cared for family  
and we slipped away  
to play  
for the day

we turned  
the calendar pages  
memories  
stored

we laughed  
and cried  
we tried  
to make a life





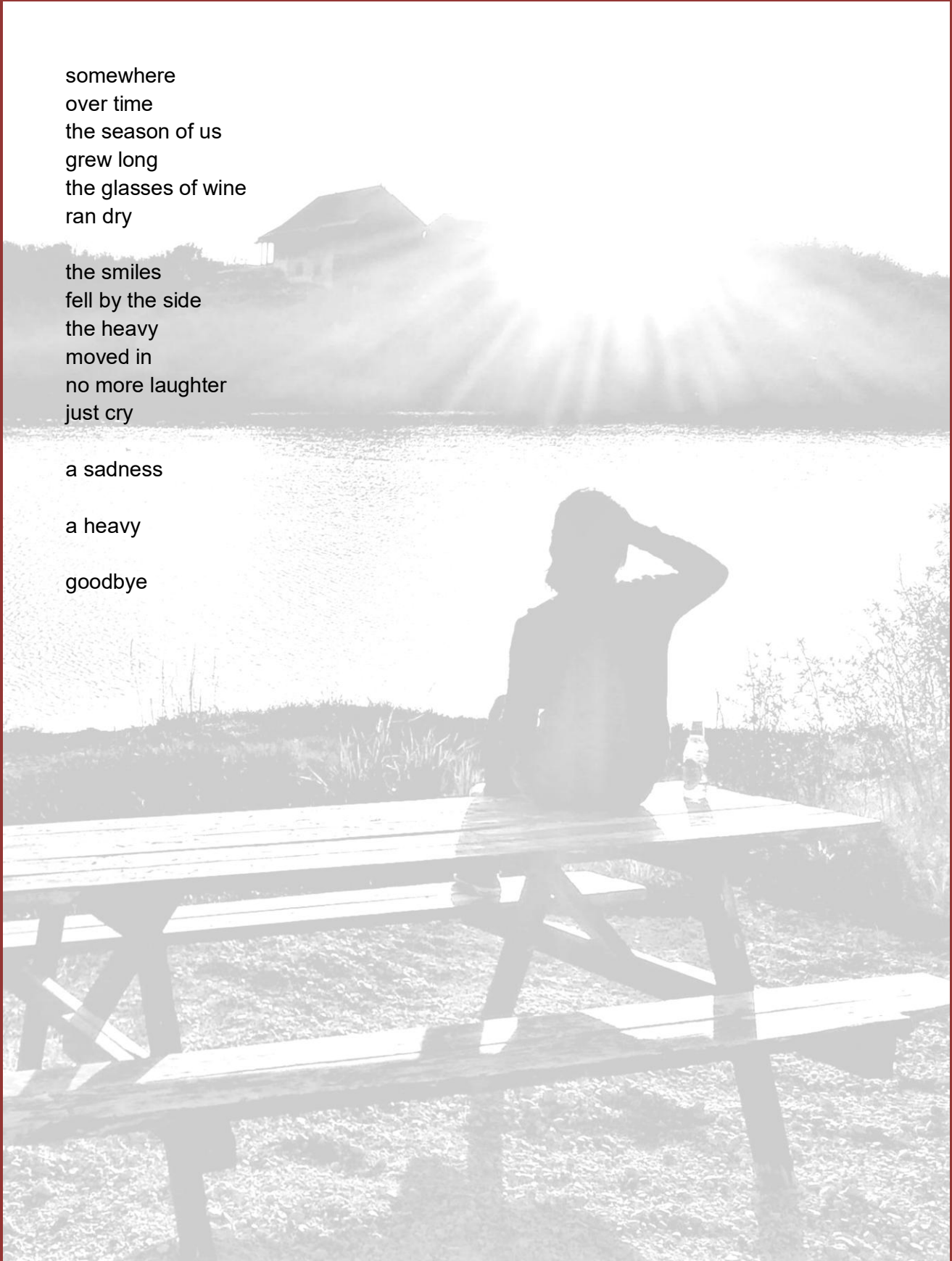
somewhere  
over time  
the season of us  
grew long  
the glasses of wine  
ran dry

the smiles  
fell by the side  
the heavy  
moved in  
no more laughter  
just cry

a sadness

a heavy

goodbye



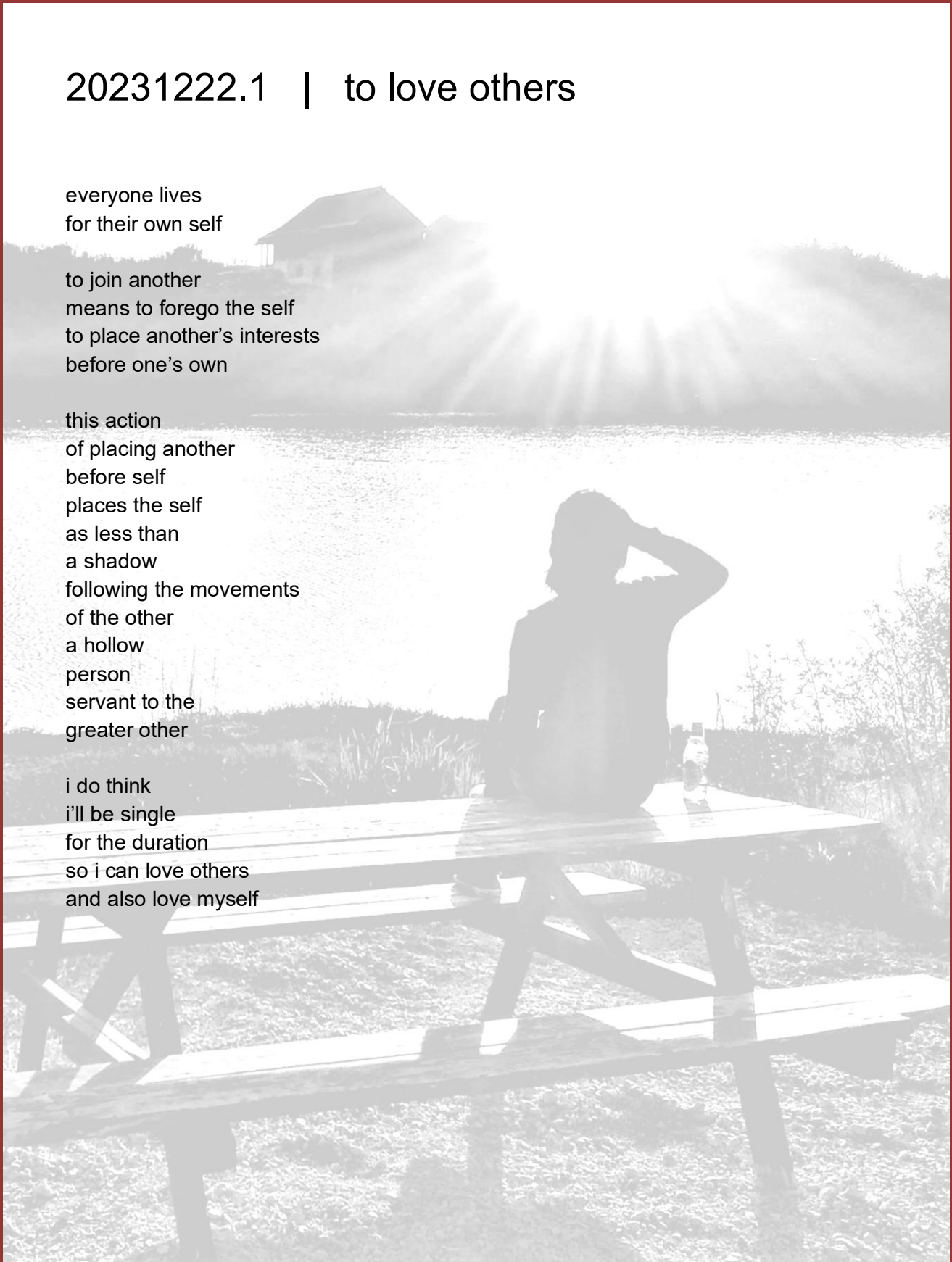
## 20231222.1 | to love others

everyone lives  
for their own self

to join another  
means to forego the self  
to place another's interests  
before one's own

this action  
of placing another  
before self  
places the self  
as less than  
a shadow  
following the movements  
of the other  
a hollow  
person  
servant to the  
greater other

i do think  
i'll be single  
for the duration  
so i can love others  
and also love myself



## 20231229.1 | the future is atheist

i keep trying  
to put people from the past  
into the present  
into the future

it doesn't work

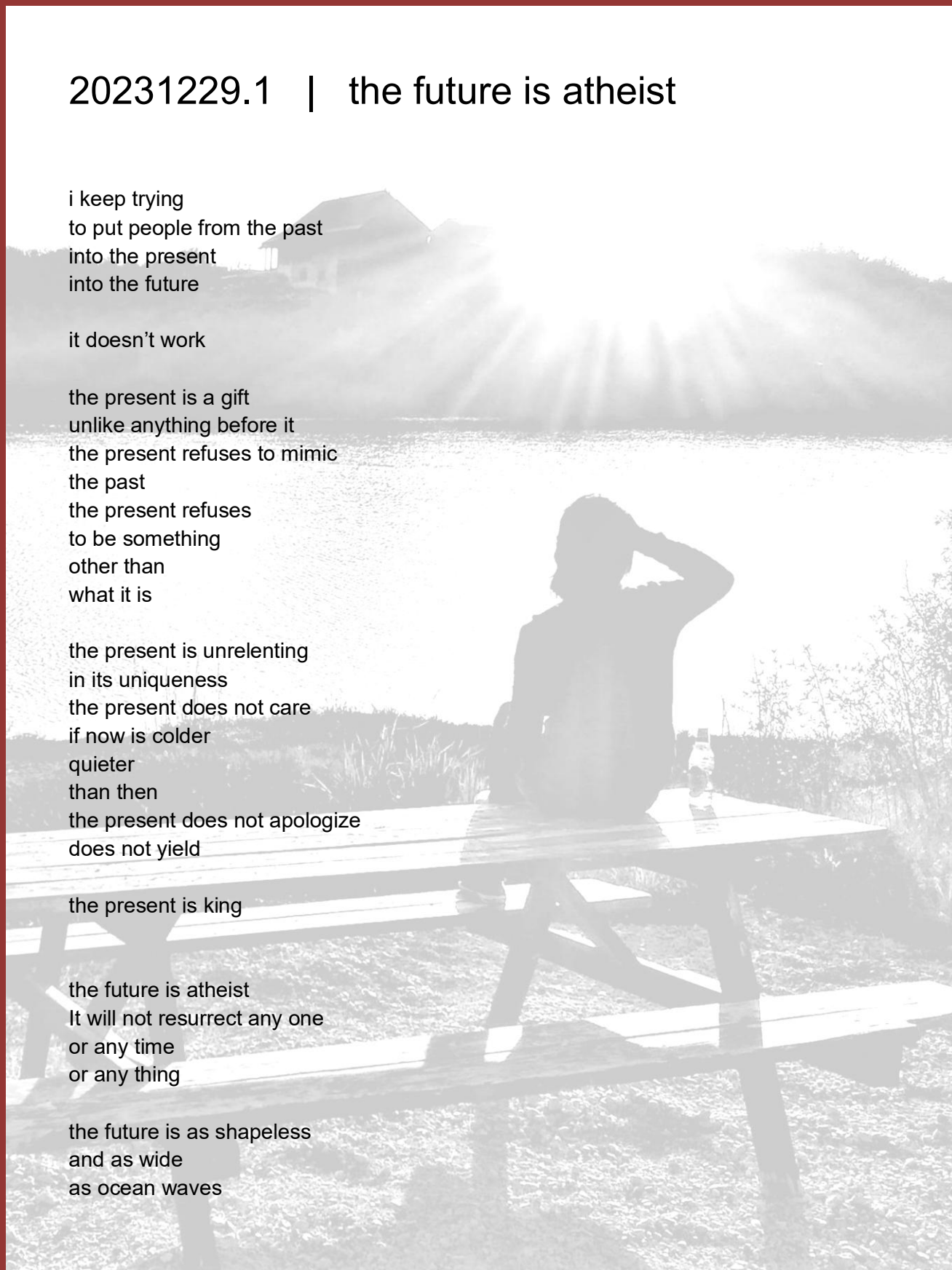
the present is a gift  
unlike anything before it  
the present refuses to mimic  
the past  
the present refuses  
to be something  
other than  
what it is

the present is unrelenting  
in its uniqueness  
the present does not care  
if now is colder  
quieter  
than then  
the present does not apologize  
does not yield

the present is king

the future is atheist  
It will not resurrect any one  
or any time  
or any thing

the future is as shapeless  
and as wide  
as ocean waves

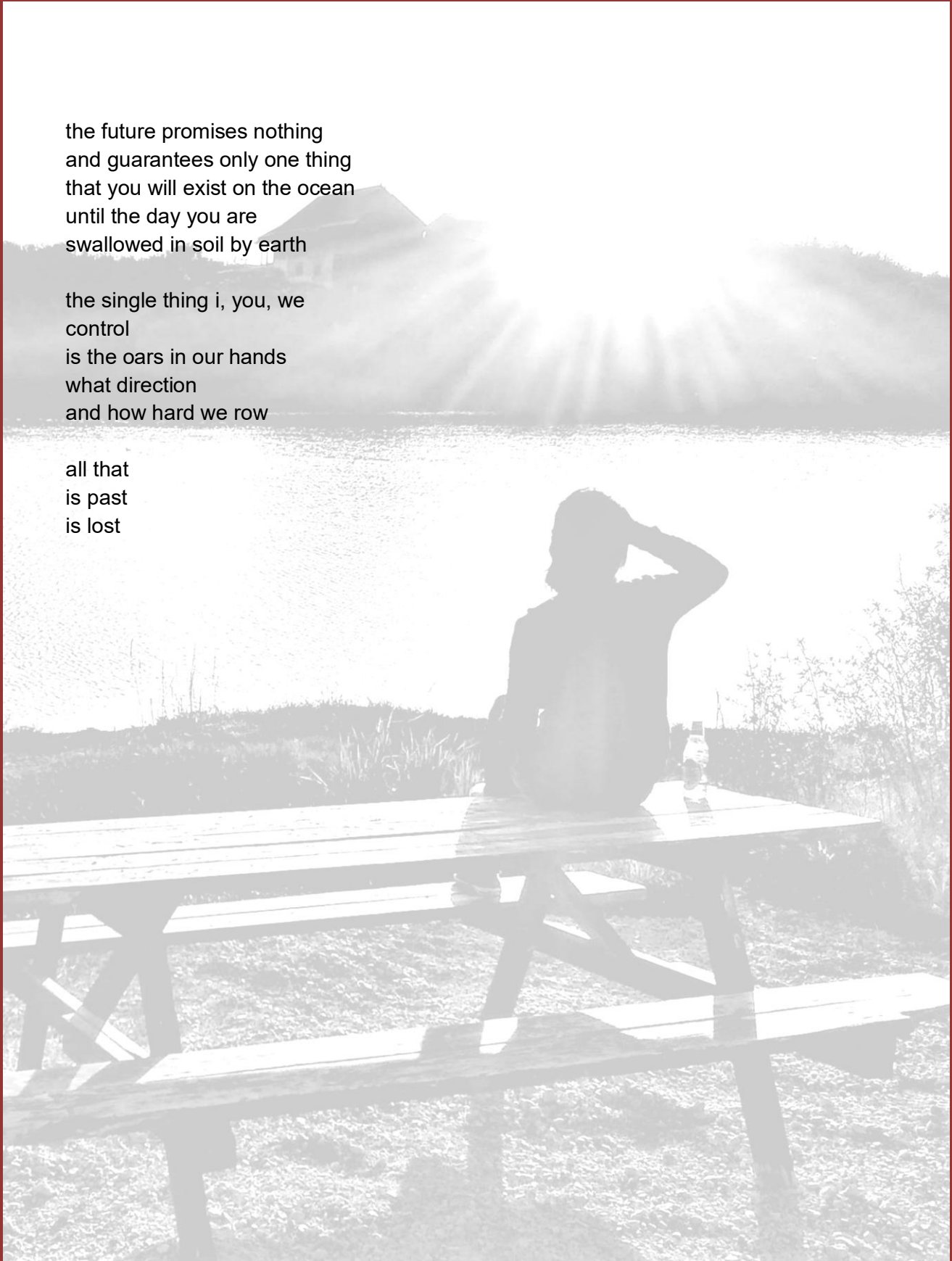




the future promises nothing  
and guarantees only one thing  
that you will exist on the ocean  
until the day you are  
swallowed in soil by earth

the single thing i, you, we  
control  
is the oars in our hands  
what direction  
and how hard we row

all that  
is past  
is lost



end

# A Human Life

a book of poems

by  
pc keefer

book two  
end

